CLAUDIA SONINO

GERMAN JEWS IN PALESTINE, 1920–1948

BETWEEN DREAM AND REALITY

German Jews in Palestine, 1920–1948: Between Dream and Reality

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By Claudia Sonino
Translated by Juliet Haydock

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To my Beloved.

Contents

Introduction: Between Worlds

"All journeys," wrote Martin Buber, "have secret destinations of which the traveller is unaware."[1] Buber's statement could not have been truer for the six characters described here who, as my friend the academic Jakob Hessing suggested, were in search of an author.[2] Hugo Bergmann, Gershom Scholem, Gabriele Tergit, Else Lasker-Schüler, Arnold Zweig, and Paul Mühsam set off for Palestine between the 1920s and 1930s and the following pages contain an account of their travels and sojourns in Eretz Yisrael. Their common destination, Palestine under the British Mandate, was a hard and difficult reality that each of the characters had to come to terms with. It was a Palestine that would prove to be not an empty country but a contested country that had seen growing Jewish settlement over time and growing conflict with the majority population residing there: the Arabs.

Historical events are evoked while telling the story of these characters who found themselves, in different ways and at different times, coming to terms with hopes and disappointments, with exciting discoveries and distressing findings, between light and shade. Between two worlds. Between two worlds in more than one sense: between the German world—their common source whose culture had given some of them their Zionist imprinting, others their Jewish imagination and visions of an original wellspring of Judaism nourished by *fin de siècle* neo-romanticism, and others a solid *Bildung*, a linguistic and cultural heritage that would go with them even to the old new land—and the Jewish world.

This was the situation in Palestine before the proclamation of the State of Israel—our cut-off date—a country that was under construction and coming to terms, among other things, with the building of a language and of a Jewish culture. Each author or character described here is necessarily caught be-

tween two worlds, which to simplify matters we will call German and Jewish—which was actually something they had also experienced, albeit in different ways, in their own countries of origin. The narrative also moves between another two worlds, namely the world of dreams—personal and collective, dating back to the ancient millennial imagination of exile, a history of the souls of diasporic generations—and the reality of a country under construction, grappling with momentous historical problems that would be decisive in shaping an unpredictable and unexpected reality. First of these was the tragedy of the Jews persecuted and expelled from Germany and Austria and, more generally, from central Europe, by National Socialism, which was to overshadow events from 1933 but particularly from 1935 bringing the Yishuv—the Jewish population of Palestine—and the Zionist leadership face-to-face with a reality that would have been practically unimaginable only ten years earlier.

The building of a Jewish national home in Palestine, as set out in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, was therefore affected by internal and external events that turned the proposed gradual settlement in the utopian spirit of Zionism expressed by the socialist Zionism pioneers, and a qualified, or rather a conscious and ethically determined Jewish aliyah,[3] into a necessity. It might have been possible to bring about this settlement, despite a host of difficulties, in agreement with the Arabs, thus realizing the dream of Buber, and not only Buber, as we will see, who saw Palestine as a land for two peoples. The Yishuv thus found themselves confronted with historical, local, and international circumstances that over the course of time would end up changing the very nature of the Balfour Declaration. Against this uncertain, dramatic reality and, lest we forget, moving in primitive and pioneering living conditions or even in fear of their own lives, our characters were gradually faced with a very different reality from the one that they had imagined from afar in their dreams before they set foot on the holy ground. As we know, dreams can be interpreted in many ways and may become the subject of contention in real life. Reality, even that of Eretz Yisrael, is a place where many dreams, unfulfilled dreams, partly fulfilled dreams, or dreams still to be fulfilled come together or clash. Zion is certainly no exception in this regard: it has sparked dreams and interpretations, daydreams, hopes, projections of desire, nostalgia, and promise for thousands of years, generation after generation, interpretation after interpretation.

What happened, then, to Israel, when its metaphysical gravitational pull became physical? What made it so different from all other nations? Or, in the words of DeKoven Ezrahi, what happens when ancient pages and manuscripts turn into front-page items in today's newspapers?[4] Our characters and witnesses describe the way that they laboriously worked their way through these questions with varying degrees of awareness. The question underlying each of these experiences is whether the goal of exile, in other words of a

tradition and of a story or meta-story, in the words of the philosopher Franz Rosenzweig, can subsequently be described or, better still, if there might actually be a return from exile.

Exile seems to insinuate itself into return, a return that, partly for this reason, is difficult or even impossible to describe. It seems likely that things went better for the great mediaeval poet Jehuda Ben Halevy, who died before reaching Jerusalem and was never able to tell the end of his story. Eretz Yisrael was to appear to most people as not so much or not only the center of exile, as it was in the diasporic imagination for centuries, but the exile itself. Tikkun, or redemption, is slow in coming. The Messiah is not coming. This form of metaphysical desperation marked the first years spent in the Land by Gershom Scholem, whose story we will follow up to his declaration about the defeat of Zionism. This drama was also experienced by Else Lasker-Schüler who discovered, with heartfelt dismay and disbelief, that life in Jerusalem is just the same as everywhere else. Strange, she observed. There is no thread holding us together here in the land of the Jews. And thus Jerusalem, the city of her dreams, became a necropolis, a mausoleum, a petrified city that devoured its children.

Disappointment over the "fabled Eretz Yisrael" was the experience of Arnold Zweig, who had sung the praises of the Zionist and socialist epic in Germany but, on arrival in Palestine, reluctantly complained of a reality that was too clear, too sharp, with over-distinct outlines onto which he could no longer project images of desire as he had been able to do in Berlin. This realization threatened to put an end to his dream. He no longer took any notice of the pioneers, who he had initially lauded and praised. He ignored them. But he did not ignore, he could not and would not ignore the fact that political murder still went on even in Eretz Yisrael, as he described in the novel *De Vriendt kehrt heim*, thus putting an end to the dream of the new man, the new Jew, who could begin life afresh, and to his narrative.

Light and shade alternate in the perception of the new reality by Hugo Bergmann, who came from Prague with very high ethical hopes about the fulfillment of Zionism, his great dream. The philosopher saw Zionism as nothing more or less than the sanctification of the Name, in other words the sanctification of reality. Buber's pupil believed it necessary to sanctify the relationship between people, between the Jews and the Other, which essentially means Arabs in Palestine. We will see how Bergmann came to rely, in time, on a gradual fulfillment: a man of *Bildung* and of continuous ethical improvement and self-improvement as well as a man of the institutions—for a short time he supported the Hebrew University where he taught philosophy until the end—Bergman entrusted this task, this mission, to future generations. Only the work of generations could establish whether Zionism was like every other nationalist movement or whether it could aspire to sanctification of the world.

Gabriele Tergit and Paul Mühsam arrived in Palestine when they were expelled from their beloved Germany. Once Tergit, a renowned journalist and writer with democratic and progressive leanings in the Weimar Republic, arrived in Palestine, she would seek to find her way into another, difficult world, attempting to explore the many human and social realities and question the reasoning behind Zionism, which she addressed in long essays despite not agreeing even with its premises. At most, the writer believed that Palestine could be a refuge for Jews who were persecuted elsewhere, but she did not believe that this was the path that the country had taken. Instead the road appeared to lead to forced Jewishization of life, of language, and of people. With her existence rooted in the diaspora, Tergit was to return to Europe in 1938, disappointed by the atmosphere of the ghetto and not very well-disposed toward others who had, like her and a good part of the German Jewish enclave, ended up there but had a different view of the Zionist chauvinism that she believed was dominant in Palestine.

Another different experience was that of Paul Mühsam, a lawyer and writer who arrived in Palestine out of necessity, not driven by utopian dreams, and eventually chose to stay there, appreciating the Jewish conquests, the selfless and generous nature of the kibbutzim, in his opinion the true soul of the country, and discovering for the first time the freedom to be Jewish without fear or expulsion even though he would never be able nor wish to fully integrate with the country culturally: German was to remain the language of his heart and of his writings, even though he acknowledged that Palestine was his true homeland, no longer Germany.

NOTES

1. M. Buber, *The Legend of the Baal-Shem,* Italian translation by D. Lattes, M. Beilinson (Milano:Gribaudi, 1995), 29.
2. *Six Characters in Search of an Author* is a 1921 Italian play by Italian dramatist Luigi Pirandello.
3. Aliyah (ascent, in Hebrew), migration to the land of Israel.
4. S. DeKoven Ezrahi, *Booking Passage, Exile and Homecoming in the Modern Jewish Imagination* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 2000), 5.

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From Prague to Jerusalem

Hugo Bergmann

"The problem of Yavne or Jerusalem,[1] the relationship between our underlying spiritual essence and our equally essential transformation into a nation of this world is . . . the fundamental problem of our existence . . . . I believe that only synthesis can bring a solution,"[2] Hugo Bergmann wrote in 1918. And Zionism, the Jewish national movement, was what Bergmann called upon to represent the synthesis between spiritual and diasporic Judaism, and the old and new national essence of the land: "Zionism is actually . . . a synthesis of two elements, the worldly and the spiritual," he had written in 1916, "elements that have clashed with one another and yearned for one another from the beginning of our history and cannot find themselves."[3] Over the coming pages, we will attempt to establish if and to what extent this aspiration, like all the expectations associated with Zionism and its mission, were fulfilled on the journey that took Bergmann from *fin de siècle* Prague to the Jerusalem of the 1920s.

Hugo Bergmann was born in Prague, part of the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire, in 1883. Like his famous school classmate Franz Kafka, he belonged to the first generation of Prague Jews. His father's family had moved into the city of Prague from the Czech village of Chrastice in 1880, shortly before his birth, while his mother's family was from the town of Pribram. In accordance with typical models of Jewish-German acculturation in Prague, German was spoken at home and the children attended German-speaking schools while the observance of religious practice was neglected, although not absent altogether in the Bergmann household.[4] Hugo attended lessons in the Talmud and Torah on his own initiative after school and was one of the very few people in his generation to learn Hebrew, a language he

loved and that he would improve throughout the course of his life. Many years later, however, he would recount that as a child he had not received his Judaism from the Jewish institutions of Prague but at his uncle's home in Chrastice, where the family spent their summers.[5] In addition to his much-proclaimed integration into the classically German educational system, he also had plenty of cultural and social contacts with Catholics who spoke Czech, such as the country people and neighbors with whom Bergmann spent his summers. As Kieval observed in this regard, his assimilation into the German culture therefore concealed, with hindsight, a more detailed and complex reality. In a worthwhile recent study, Shumsky called attention to the fact that the links between the Prague Jews and the Czech culture and environment were more extensive, multi-faceted, and complex than the classic German-centric historiography on Jewish Prague has so far acknowledged.[6] While some of the Zionist Jews of Prague saw themselves as bridges, as mediators between the German and Czech worlds, in many cases speaking both languages unlike the Germans (which is why Shumsky, in such cases, prefers to use the term Czech-German Jews[7]) this mediating role did not stop them recognizing who they were and opting for Jewish nationality. The intellectual and cultural make-up of Prague Jews was complex and the focus of different interpretations and assessments. Their background and membership of a multi-national and multilingual empire was indubitable, even though the sun was setting on that empire, and they therefore had experience of coexistence between different cultures and peoples. Later, Bergmann would repeatedly recount the great effect on him of living in an environment of mutual multi-linguistic and multireligious interpenetration,[8] probably referring to Chrastice, but also, or so we believe, to Prague where he was born and lived until 1920, where the 25,000 Jews represented 75 percent of the German population but the majority of the population was made up of Czechs, who numbered 415,000. In the growing national conflict between the Czechs and Germans, despite considering themselves mediators and in some cases even acting as mediators between the two cultures and nationalities, the Prague Jews were bound to feel that their position was unstable, precarious, suspended in space and especially difficult to sustain in a Prague where signs of the end of the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire could no longer be ignored. The Jews of Prague were thus, in a sense, outsiders and residents at the same time or, as observed by Spector, they occupied a space that was both inside and outside, between belonging and not belonging, between power and lack of power, between immanence and transcendence, slavery and freedom, matter and spirit. They were constantly struggling with a real territorial dilemma because even though they were a majority within the ruling German culture in Prague, they were also part of a German minority in a Prague with a Slavic majority, and a minority within the Habsburg monarchy of which the Germans were the ruling class.[9] According to Spec-

tor, this territorial dilemma was what prompted the genesis of Prague Zionism and, closer to home, led to Bergmann's Zionism as an affirmation of a spiritual land.[10] The Prague Jews would therefore have seemed to be an entity without a center, or simply a center, or a circle and could only ever be defined in relation to others, to Germans or Czechs or to both in some cases, without their own independent definition. When they also thought of themselves as mediators and a bridge between the German nation and the Czech nation, the perception that they mostly still had of themselves remained shaped by the Austro-German culture.[11] Leo Hermann, an exponent and interpreter of that world, observed that the Prague Jews were Jews insofar as they were Germans, but as Germans they were Jews, it was just that they were unaware of it:[12] their existence was therefore a paradox or an abstraction. The community of Prague Jews was very old. Bergmann referred to this in his *Letter to a poet* when he said, "in the Jew seated before you at the café there live prophets, priests of Baal, kings, traders, traitors and martyrs."[13] Brought up in the shadow of the Prague Maharal, the legendary Rabbi Loew and his tradition, the Prague Jews were not devotees but they were far from being non-believers.[14] Now, despite their mediating role and, in some cases, their sympathy and emotional sensitivity to the Czech world, they felt that they did not have a future either as Jews or as Germans, and were thus condemned to live and be thought of as *Endprodukte*, end products or finished products. This was not merely due to the rising anti-German and therefore anti-Semitic Czech nationalism in a Prague that was becoming increasingly Slavic, but also because they were well aware that German anti-Semitism, though nearly absent in Prague, was nevertheless present and growing in the German-speaking area. The time was therefore ripe for the rise of Zionism among this generation with no way out of the *westjüdische Zeit*, western Jewish age, as Kafka described his own time[15]—who deliberately stayed on the sidelines or better still in a corner of this complex history. Zionism was the only possible solution because it made it possible to carry on living in a present without a future; it allowed you to project your hopes of life elsewhere while also seeming to offer a distinct change of course from the present. For the very reason that it questioned the whole diasporic existence, Zionism represented a sea change, a radical alternative, not a simple return to the past, which was not in any case feasible, but a break with the present, a present that there was otherwise no way to escape. In sharp contrast with the liberal and assimilating Judaism of their fathers, Zionism, with its claims of a national Jewish identity, represented an opportunity for this handful of Prague youngsters, children of the Prague Jewish bourgeoisie, to finally achieve their own independence and proudly define themselves. This multilingual and multi-religious reality, but also the space divided, crossed and undermined by national conflicts, which was Prague under the multinational Austro-Hungarian monarchy, therefore helped foster Jewish

nationalism between the end of the century and the early decades of the twentieth century. A Jewish nationalism, however, which had been and continued to be molded by the multiculturalism and multi-nationalism of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and was therefore constantly seeking a dialogue with the surrounding world, with the environment in which it was called upon to work. This was also ably reflected, as we shall see, in the political and cultural stances that Bergmann himself was to adopt with regard to Eretz Yisrael.[16] In line with the political ideals of his youth, later in Palestine as a member of Brit Shalom, together with Robert Weltsch and Hans Kohn, Bergmann came to see Zionism as the historical and political possibility of founding an Arab-Jewish community or society and he would strive, as we shall see, to make the country an Arab and Jewish mosaic or binational federation, in which the two distinct and different nationalities would dialogue and cooperate.[17]

Returning to the intellectual biography of Bergmann, Kieval rightly observed that, in the case of his family, the situation was that of a fragile German externality, if it were true, as was the case, that both parents and children were associated with the nascent Jewish nationalism.[18] Again, acculturation to the surrounding society did not seem to involve assimilation or loss of belonging.[19] Bergmann's father, Siegmund, joined the Jewish club Zion when this formed and his mother Johanna was an activist within the women's Zionist movement in Prague, while his older brother Arthur started actively working for the newly created Bar Kochba, the Zionist association for students in Prague, when he enrolled in the University.[20] It comes as no surprise to learn, therefore, that the young Hugo became a Zionist activist as early as 1898, when he was still a student at the Altstädter Gymnasium. His decision to join the Bar Kochba in 1901, when he enrolled at the University, was therefore the logical outcome of those years, although we must not forget that a link with the German culture was still perceived as a relationship that was not merely a priority but actually indispensable within the Zionist option since, as we shall see, Bergmann was to stress that for him and the young generation of Prague Zionists the thing that was really decisive in their formulation and rediscovery of Judaism was the German culture.

It is difficult to closely reconstruct Bergmann's initial Zionist commitment because, as Kieval[21] observed, we have no archival documents relating to the early years of the Zionist movement in Prague and we can only proceed on the basis of what we have been left of the contemporary press, autobiographical material, letters, and memoirs. One such letter of 1902, which is important in itself but also because it is addressed to Kafka, revealed some of the reasons that led the young Bergmann to Zionism. When writing to the man who had been his classmate for twelve years and who thought that Zionism was a "fixation,"[22] Bergmann argued that Zionism was part of his life, even something that held together the "shreds of his ego."[23] For the

young Hugo, Zionism therefore offered a solution to a problem of identity. It was something that could encompass the potential or real split of the ego, that could probably be divided across several, multiple forms of belonging and different identities. His friend Franz had a different fate, because he could dream and found the strength to be alone through his own self-reliance. Hugo, on the other hand, could not dream too much and even when he had dreams he could not fulfill them because he had to deal with a harsh reality that prevented him from doing so.[24] "I tried and tried . . . but I could not find the strength to be alone like you," and he went on: "It was my legacy to feel longing for the others and for my heart to beat so eagerly. Do not believe that it was compassion that made me a Zionist. A good portion of my Zion is made up of selfishness." Zionism thus represented a communal solution to a personal problem, a solution to an existential problem that preserved or saved his ego. And he continued:

> I feel as though I would like to fly, that I would like to create and I cannot, I no longer have the strength, and yet I also feel that perhaps under different circumstances I would have the strength . . . . And thus my Zionism is an expression of my longing for love and because I am aware that thousands of others are suffering like me, I want to go with them, to work with them. . . . Maybe," concluded his Zionist friend, "we would still be able to overcome this weakness if we were rooted in our own soil, if we did not wave around like an uprooted reed, maybe, maybe I would find my strength again. . . . One day I would like to be on our own soil and not feel uprooted.[25]

While, as Guido Massino observed, the main cause of Kafka's lack of understanding was probably the "abandonment of the aesthetic ideals that the two friends, then 19, had shared in high school"[26]—Franz's strength unsurprisingly lay in solitude, the solitude that underpinned his creativity—Bergmann, who could barely find his own self,[27] instead hoped to regain his strength and his creativity when in contact with the community of Judaism, in becoming rooted in his own soil, in the construction of a new community and a new life in Palestine. Admittedly, in tones that were still immature, insecure, almost adolescent, full of "maybes," as if he wanted to leave several options open and as if his friend aroused in him a certain awe, Bergmann tried to explain how Zionism represented, for him, an opportunity to have an identity that, if not strong, was at least not too torn, that would allow him to work on a common project, have his own soil to take root in, which was an essential condition for creation even if, as Spector notes, Bergmann subsequently used this rootedness to fly and thus break away from a specific territory.[28] The idea that creativity arises out of rootedness in one's own community and one's own soil was also one of the prevailing themes of the *Jüdische Renaissance* espoused by Martin Buber,[29] who Bergmann had read faithfully and assiduously since his first contributions to "Die Welt,"[30] a creativity that a

Jew from the diaspora could begin to see glimmers of in the present from the Jewish renaissance represented by Zionism.

Later, when in Jerusalem, Bergmann was to explain that his Zionism was born when he attended a performance of the play *Das Neue Ghetto* by Herzl,[31] which was as much a statement about the Jewish question remaining outside—once the walls of the ghetto have fallen, invisible walls are built—as a tragic acknowledgment that the Jewish question was also a matter internal to Judaism—the critique of Jews as stock market speculators in Herzl's play makes us reflect on the causes of anti-Semitism. Bergmann's Zionism found inspiration in many sources and led him to make a life choice, the first official sign of which came between 1903 and 1904 when he assumed the presidency of Bar Kochba, the beating heart of Prague Zionism. Yet his compass was not really Herzl, who wished to use political methods to achieve an end that Bergmann also agreed with, even though he did not agree with the means: the goal cannot be achieved all at once because something that you can only build up through the work of generations cannot be accomplished quickly. His sympathies actually lay with spiritual Zionism, mainly espoused by Achad Ha'am,[32] who saw the main task of Zionism to be that of saving not so much the Jews but Judaism, building a spiritual center in Palestine that could be a model for Jews in the diaspora. Bergmann believed that without a strong and knowledgeable Galut (diaspora or Jewish exile) there could not be a Jewish Palestine. The thoughts of Achad Ha'am went hand in hand with those of his antagonist Micha Yosef Berdichevsky,[33] the Nietzschean Zionist who, unlike Achad Ha'am, focused more on Jews in the flesh than on Judaism and saw Zionism as a radical break with the past, as a transvaluation of all the values of diasporic existence, as a personal revolution—for Bergmann becoming a Zionist meant becoming another person—toward an action with an impact on all aspects of humanity, transcending all ideologies, for the very reason that the Jews are the first of all men.

"Jewishness and humanity," wrote Bergmann on this subject, "must be as one."[34] Again with Berdichevsky, Bergmann stressed the "Jewish life,"[35] yet in the sense that "returning to the land must not mean a struggle against the Jewish spirit but a fight for the spirit. The spirit of Jewishness has become a reality, it must be achieved and experienced."[36] Jewishness, he wrote "must have as its ideal a true kingdom of God on earth."[37] Bergmann was also influenced by the Zionism of Berthold Feiwel (1875–1937), who focused on the need, from a Zionist perspective, to work to improve the cultural, economic, and political conditions of Jews in the diaspora in the present. This was the "Gegenwartsarbeit," endorsed by the Democratic Fraction and then by Buber himself in the Fifth Zionist Congress of 1901—which required an immediate commitment to educating young people in Zionism and devoting yourself to the problems of the Jewish masses. "If Palestine must mean something to us," wrote Bergmann in 1911, "if it must be our cultural center

and we want to be the periphery on which the light pours, then we must educate ourselves in the exceptional nature of that light. . . . The Zionist work must teach us to find that center of gravity in ourselves even in the Galut."[38] However, Buber had always been Bergmann's mentor and guiding light and this influence increased as time went on. Buber was invited to Prague by the Bar Kochba as early as 1903. On that occasion, he very probably outlined some of the guidelines of his thought,[39] including his critique of the oppressiveness of the Law that had been perpetrated over the centuries of the Jews' existence in exile by the rigid rabbinate and the breakdown of this spiritual, moral, and material inertia by Hasidism and Haskala on the threshold of the modern age.

Old and recent suggestions and stimuli contributed to his decision to make a trip to Galicia among the eastern Jews in 1903, with the intention of making an old wish come true: "Seeing Jews wearing kaftans and locks and real, proper Jewish blood,"[40] in other words seeing live and living Judaism,[41] in the flesh.[42] This trip was thus to discover or develop another Judaism very different from the bloodless and formal Prague Judaism, although, alongside the real Jewish life with all its interior transport and devotion, Bergmann noted when among the Hasidim their "superstition,"[43] their lack of interest in contemporary matters. At the market in Krakow he saw Jews that were "ragged, dirty; haggling, screaming, yelling."[44] This journey revealed his admiration but also his disgust for the true Jews, the ambivalence that—from the time of Heine's famous trip to Poland—had marked the feelings experienced by western Jews about eastern Jews.[45] This report makes it clear the extent to which Zionism could and had to work in the present to release the Jews from abnormal living conditions, from the ghetto, and from their mentality, from the cash-oriented and parasitic economy of the Galut, from abnormal living conditions that affected, albeit in a different way, both eastern Jews and western Jews and combined to make up the Jewish question, the question of Jews and Judaism.

Bergmann wrote reams on this and other topics relating to fundamental issues of Judaism and Zionism from his early years of militancy. While pursuing cultural work in the present within the Zionist organization, he pointed out the topics that he felt most keenly about on the Zionist front and highlighted them from time to time in his speeches. And, as Shumsky observed, this examination and reappropriation of the Jewish heritage and its language did not impede Bergmann in his dialogue with the German and Czech world but rather encouraged it: only the awareness of his own Jewishness could engender a truthful and real understanding and openness to the culture of his surrounding world.[46]

Bergmann's cultural commitment was not only directed toward Zionism: his early years were occupied by his studies of German philosophy at the University of Prague, culminating in 1906 with a doctorate under the guid-

ance of the philosopher Anton Marty. This was followed by a series of publications on philosophical subjects, including a major study on the philosophy of Bolzano. In this, as Shumsky[47] observed, Bergmann emphasized his political desire for a space or a frame where nationalities, conscious of their diversity, could live together without having to give up what made them different. This line of thought would influence Bergmann for a long time to come. This stage was followed by understandable aspirations to qualify as a lecturer and follow a university career. This pathway proved unviable both in Prague and Germany, because Bergmann refused to take the step that several asked of him, including Franz Brentano, namely to be baptized. "My mother tongue is German, I attended German schools, I speak and think in German," he wrote in 1914 to the philosopher Carl Stumpf, who had invited him to Berlin for three months with a view to qualifying as a lecturer and from whom he hoped for help, "I have learnt what I have been able to scientifically only from the Germans."[48] He then went on to explain how his Zionist involvement was in no way hostile or conflicting with his sense of belonging and gratitude to the German culture, but instead was all to do with personal dignity. Acknowledging one's biological and historical identity is a sign of personal dignity that the Germans should appreciate even in Jews who wish to assimilate, explained Bergmann, and also a way to remedy a situation of imbalance caused by the fact that present-day Jews who have not grown up steeped in European culture but have hastily and casually assumed this mantle, have largely become advocates of materialism, of atheism, exponents of a metropolitan and hypermodern mentality that negates values.[49] Only by reappropriating the values of their own tradition and rooting themselves in it, said Bergmann, would it be possible to put an end to that deplorable state of affairs and the disharmony that caused the personality of most western Jews to be divided between a sense of belonging that was no longer felt and known, and an assimilation that was more presumed than real. "The contraposition between assimilation and Zionism," he therefore concluded, "is extremely superficial."[50] Stumpf replied to this very complicated letter—which also bears witness to a painful introjection of anti-Jewish stereotypes formulated by the German culture, beginning with Wagner and continuing with Weininger's Jewish anti-Semitism, and is also a very personal reworking of the themes dear to Buber and his *völkisch* analysis of the nature of assimilated Judaism—by explaining that Bergmann's militancy in the Zionist organization was an obstacle to a university career in Berlin. As Massino[51] observed, refusal must have brought Bergmann, more than others, face-to-face with the impossibility of effectively leading, not merely on the personal front, a Jewish life in Germany on a political, social, and cultural level. Given the unfeasibility of an academic career, Bergmann therefore began to work as an assistant at the University of Prague Library and continued his philosophical studies. Prominent among these was his first paper written in

Hebrew on the philosophical method of Bergson.[52] This brought him fame and prestige and he found it possible to continue and fulfill his studies in Palestine, where Bergmann taught Philosophy at the University of Jerusalem from 1928. By his own admission, these teachings were to consist of an "introduction to the German spiritual life and the problems of German philosophy."[53]

As can be seen from the letter, Bergmann saw Zionism also and above all as the re-acquisition of the present, of the dignity of the diasporic Jew, a melding of his split personality: "Zionism," he wrote, "is Judaism on the road to self-liberation"[54] The priority was therefore not so much to return to Palestine, which remained an option in the background, but rather the self-work that Jews must carry out in the present, regaining possession of their own tradition, of the Hebrew language—which Bergmann considered necessary and indispensable to learn[55]—and of Hebrew literature, including the ancient texts but also the most recent, or as he put it later in an essay: "the tree, the bush, the air, the wind, the dog, everything there is Jewish."[56] The philosopher Martin Buber repeatedly called upon the generation of Prague Jews, and Bergmann himself, to carry out this work in the present. This was one of the sentiments he expressed in his famous speeches on Judaism delivered in Prague between 1909 and 1912 at the invitation of the Bar Kochba. Bergmann was subsequently to say that these speeches represented an inward turning point for his generation, leading to a new Jewish orientation,[57] in which Zionism presented itself simultaneously as a radical solution to personal problems, a blunt refusal of bourgeois ideals and also a break with the parasitic culture of assimilation in the manner practiced by their fathers' generation. Buber voiced and put forward the idea that Zionism, the Jewish rebirth, was a response to a personal need for a new Jewish identity, for a Jewish renewal in terms of a "return" to the origin, but at the same time in terms of a "regeneration" of Judaism, a spiritual rebirth, freeing traditional Judaism from the disease of the ghetto and the sterile culture of the rabbinate, hostile forces that had repressed Jewish creativity through the tyranny of the Law. There was a need to reshape the life of the Jewish people, re-educate them about beauty and thus lay the basis for a Jewish rebirth or Renaissance, while interior liberation should precede external redemption. Although this cultural program of Buber's called for a renewal of Judaism and demanded a different relationship with the culture of assimilation, it also took for granted a break with the Jewish past. Buber was addressing young people who were largely unaware of tradition and for whom the reformulation of Judaism was bound by necessity to take place through the mediation of the German culture and, closer to home, the neoromantic *fin de siècle* culture. In this way, Buber was able to win the hearts of the young Prague Zionists and of Bergmann himself: the Judaism that he was holding up to them was simultaneously a refusal to persist with the bloodless and lifeless Judaism that the mem-

bers of the Bar Kochba had experienced in their fathers' houses, and an invitation to explore "new lands,"[58] to reconnect to the uninterrupted blood line flowing through the generations through learning in the present with the aim of rediscovering, knowing, and loving every cultural manifestation of the Jewish spirit in order to redefine one's whole personality in the here and now. This would then allow the young Jews to fulfill their Jewishness by building a new society and a new life in Palestine. From this viewpoint, becoming Zionists was comparable to becoming artists. Even before his famous three speeches, Buber was the one who gave Bergmann the cornerstone of a new vision of the world during his years in Prague, as Bergmann reminded the Master in 1928, on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday:

> As a young schoolboy I read with flushed cheeks your first articles on the 'Welt.' I did not know you yet, but I felt that those words were speaking to me. Then came the time of your first visit to Prague, the time of the 'Jüdischer Verlag,' the speeches and your book on Judaism.[59] You already know what every one of your visits to Prague meant for us. Then you gathered your circle of people around 'Der Jude,' you brought us together when we were further apart than ever, dispersed in space and spirit. Then we met again after the war at the Prague Conference,[60] and we pursued socialist Zionism with you.[61]

Even later, in Palestine, as we shall see, Bergmann remained emotionally and culturally attached to his Prague imprinting, to Buber and to the friends of his youth—who would mostly go on to become important personalities in the Zionist organization—such as Robert Weltsch, Leo Hermann, and Hans Kohn, to name but a few. And it was with them and with Buber that Bergmann hoped to be able to form a group that was active also in Palestine so that together they could exert some influence. However, as we shall see, this was only minimally possible partly because life—he would observe with regret—had separated them and divided them.[62]

Assimilation and Zionism, he had written to Stumpf, are not contradictory. In the same way, Zionism does not question love and affiliation to the German culture, which stands alongside Zionist militancy. Instead, Zionism and the German culture are interwoven: unlike Gershom Scholem, Bergmann took part in the war like most of the German Zionists and in this too he was a faithful disciple of Buber. As he would confess, not without regret, to Buber in a famous letter of 1915:

> Now that we have begun fighting for German *kultur*, we feel more than ever what it means to us and how we are immersed in it with our whole beings. I cannot imagine that our generation's artificially acquired relationship with biblical and Hasidic Judaism, etc., will ever become as natural as our relationship with Fichte, that man of European culture who showed us the way to humanism. Only because we had Fichte were we able to find the corresponding currents of Jewish culture, only then did we understand Judaism. We were

> educated there, we discovered ourselves here. Can we then enter a Jewish cultural life only as Germans and I ask myself wretchedly, where is the community, where is there a place for us?[63]

A tragic and sorrowful question, a good question that perhaps did not find an answer in Palestine then or later. Instead it has deepened and remained the same problem of Bergmann's life, and maybe not only that of Bergmann.

Why Fichte? Because in the introduction to *Worte Mosis*, in 1913, Bergmann wrote, "Is Fichte the philosopher that we can best equate with the prophets of Israel?"[64] Why did his philosophical circle read Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*? Why did the young Zionists begin to devour Fichte so eagerly in around 1910? This was not merely because they saw in Fichte nationalism and cosmopolitanism united and inseparable,[65] in other words the idea that you can contribute to humanity only by developing your own specific character, but also, as Voigts argued so persuasively, in Fichte they found a formulation of the national identity that appealed to the wellspring, to something very ancient and ancestral,[66] a national identity that appealed to the community, not the State. The young Zionists were particularly struck not only by *Reden an die Deutsche Nation*, but also a passage from *Bestimmung des Menschen* in which Fichte wrote: "So I live, and so I am; and so I am unchangeable, firm and complete for all eternity. For this being is not one which I have received from without; it is my own only true being and essence."[67] This was a call to the young Zionists not to receive their being and essence from outside, but to formulate their own being and essence in a Jewish way. In Fichte, they also found the enthusiasm they needed to uproot themselves from the culture of assimilation and become something radically new through an act of will;[68] another decisive thing was, as Voigts pointed out, the "metaphysical atmosphere" that they found in the philosopher, the activist manifesto, the longing for action, the rejection of an understanding of the contemplative world in favor of change, the rejection of the Book—the Talmud in the case of the Jews—in favor of life.[69] As Bergmann wrote in 1918 in "Jerubbaal," the magazine founded by Siegfried Bernfeld, Buber's pupil, Jews had everything to learn from Fichte.

Because Fichte, like Moses, saw the spirit as central "Faith in the spirit, only in the spirit. everything else, wealth, power is nothing, a shadow of a shadow."[70] The Jews had to understand that "the only crucial thing is not treasures, or mines, ports and factories, it is the way in which ownership is administered."[71] Bergmann issued a very pragmatic warning about keeping this in mind when capital made its entry into Palestine. And he concluded: "People are nothing if they are not a cloak of the eternal."[72] As Voigts observed, Bergmann's reading of Fichte was not merely philosophical but also "political."[73]

Zionism or Jewish nationalism, which had grown up in the shadow of the monarchy and been shaped by German culture, was therefore to be understood as referring to a common origin, language, culture, history and a cultural and historical renaissance of Judaism through community, not through the State. A stateless cultural nationalism, therefore, whereby an individual lived as a participant in the life and energy of the people, a nationalism that was humanist, not destructive such as that experienced in the war, a form of nationalism presaged by Herder.[74]

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," were the words of the prophet Zachariah, often and willingly quoted by Bergmann.[75] Crucially, Bergmann was guided toward spiritual values and the value of the spirit not only by Fichte, or Moses and prophets, or Buber but also by prospects of the new community of men that was to be built in Palestine. When he spoke in favor of a new community aimed at solidarity, cooperation, education, and spiritual values and not materialism or class struggle and selfishness, there was also an echo of Gustav Landauer. It comes as no surprise to learn that Bergmann proposed to translate into Hebrew his work *Aufruf zum Sozialismus*,[76] in which a martyr of the Bavarian revolution affirmed the need for economic development not to be an end in itself; in other words that its purpose should not be the accumulation of wealth and possession, but always just the person, the person and the community, culture and spirit, all that is spiritual, and that the socialist ideal should not be imposed from above, by the State, but must be built from below and across the board, by communities, by solidarity and cooperation between the men engaged in this task through their own labor and their own aspirations.

"The spirit of Judaism," Bergmann was to say, "must be experienced and achieved and must shape the reality of this world,"[77] and the realities of this world included not only the Galut, but also and above all Palestine. Bergmann made an exploratory visit there as early as 1910 to gain a personal insight into the land that was to accommodate the gradual Jewish colonization. He went with his wife Else Fanta, whom he married in 1908. She was from an educated family of the Prague Jewish bourgeoisie. Her mother, Berta, was the hostess of a cultural salon that boasted among its guests Rudolf Steiner, whose philosophy introduced Bergmann to the mystical.[78] We were still far from the Balfour Declaration of 1917, and from the British protectorate: the Palestine visited by Bergmann was still under Turkish rule. Bergmann immediately grasped the existence of the Arab question, and its crucial importance to the fate of Zionism itself. He addressed it with an open mind and ready for dialogue, an attitude that he would maintain even once he had settled in the country. He warned that Palestine was not an empty country and that the Arab question was also "a question of numbers":[79] 600,000 of the country's 700,000 inhabitants were Arabs and their numbers were growing at a rate that could not be matched by any Jewish emigration. Berg-

mann wondered whether this meant it was unrealistic to think that Jews could aspire to be the majority.[80] He also warned about how to go about buying the land, because the *fellahin*, the peasants who had worked it for generations even though they did not own it, might harbor resentment against the new Jewish owners, and called for cooperation, compensation, possibly in the guise of financial aid. "The Zionists were wrong about the Arab movement. We must hope to come to an agreement with the Arabs."[81] Bergen stressed that the Jews had to go to Palestine not as "conquerors and plundering colonisers . . . but as bearers of culture."[82] "How can the Jewish cultural centre that we wish to build in Palestine be worthy of this name unless it rests on the foundations that we once proclaimed to the world and that have always been the foundation of its civilisation?"[83] The legitimacy of Zionism could not therefore stem from practical and economic reasons but had to have an ethical, moral legitimacy—and the relationship with the Arabs was a test case for this. In an essay written after his trip, in 1918, the year after the Balfour Declaration, he claimed a need to think about making an initial attempt at establishing new bases for people to coexist in Palestine, to make it into a truly Jewish land, a land of holiness, with a totally new economy, and an economy of justice.[84] This aspiration certainly came from the teachings of the Prophet and more generally of the Torah but also from European non-Marxist socialist movements—such as that of Landauer—and from Russian socialism and Zionism such as that of Aaron David Gordon.[85] It was what he called his "great dream."[86] For Bergmann, the essential thing in Palestine would not be to overturn the capitalist working methods but to overturn the capitalist mentality, its spirit, combat the alienation of working men so that they could find a sense and a means, combat money as an end in itself and remember that it was only a means of achieving a spiritual existence, which would become possible by making Palestine financially independent of the outside world and basing the colonization on the economy of the land, relying only on what it could give. This premise and the purpose of this was to create a new kind of man through education: "The Jew who is a slave to things and loves what is dead, must be replaced by the Jew whose life is rooted in the spirit, who is ready to sacrifice and full of love and enthusiasm,"[87] aware that the financial order is the product of men's will and not vice versa, and that men are united by solidarity and love for the land and the people. Bergmann also cautioned against the dangers that would come from shifting the interest from farming to industry and trade, to a life in the city, which would reproduce all the contradictions and aberrations of the past, destroying the community spirit. He stressed that it was not a matter of becoming a majority, because the demands of the Jews did not stem from being a majority, but from "our people's longing for Palestine."[88]

"We do not wish to go there as rulers,"[89] he repeated, but to animate the land with our spirit, we want to become the decisive spiritual force in that

place. But this is not a matter of numbers. If we tried to force matters to become the majority, going against our spirit, then "the most godforsaken Hasidic school would have more Judaism in it than all the national institutions."[90] "The acid test of how truly Jewish our settlement is," he stressed, "will be our relationship with the Arabs . . . . A peaceful dialogue with them is vital for us. Our schools must open themselves to the Arabs, our books and newspapers must speak to them in their language, and Arab-Jewish society should undertake to reap the fruits of the deep historical and essential commonalities between both peoples with a view to a profitable life together."[91]

The extent to which a serene and peaceful relationship and cooperation with the Arabs of Palestine was intrinsically linked to the latter purpose, the last one assigned to Zionism, is evidenced by some of the key passages in one of his most important essays, *The Sanctification of the Name*, in which Bergmann explained that Zionism is the sanctification of the Name. Bergmann explained that God himself grants sanctity, but must be sanctified. "God's destiny depends on the world":[92] in Jewish tradition, Man is called on to cooperate with God's work. In other words, for Jews, God is a task. "God," wrote Bergmann, "created the world but Man preserves it when he recognises it as divine."[93] "In every action in which we turn something, a conditioned creature, a free nature, into an "I," in every moral action we act like God, we achieve the divine."[94] Bergmann believed that you had to sanctify the Name of God before those to whom He was a stranger. In this way, every form of moral conduct in the relationship with non-Jews becomes a sanctification of the Name.[95] Only when these conditions could be achieved, would Zionism become "our Kiddush Hashem,"[96] that sanctification of the Name, that realization of the divine that he aspired to.

When the Austro-Hungarian monarchy fell, Bergmann became a member of the National Jewish Council of the Czech Republic, but the thing most dear to his heart in that radically changed and problematic scenario,[97] where he was seeing the various nationalities being denied an independent space of their own,[98] was the idea of moving to Palestine as soon as possible. In a letter to Leo Hermann he wrote that he ultimately wanted to know if "the plans for Palestine were taking firm shape" and if they should go there "as farmers, academics, administrative clerks or teachers."[99] At the end of 1918 he wrote to Buber: "I would like nothing better than to go to Palestine."[100] He explained that it was important to go straight away and go together, to arrange a joint action as "a preparatory committee for the University or as teachers in an educational establishment . . . or as members of a magazine, a publishing house. "United," he wrote, "we would be a force that could direct, or at least strongly influence, events; as individuals we will wear out our efforts in small everyday tasks."[101] In a letter to Buber dated September 1919, he confessed his fear that "because of its [Zionism's] remoteness from the people and its language—the entire movement remains what it has hither-

to been: literary."[102] What did Bergmann mean by "literary"? He very probably meant that the meetings, discussions, and reflections carried out in the name of cultural work in the present had given meaning to life in exile, making it more tempting. There was thus a risk that everything would be left as an end in itself, it would remain literature, and that they would continue to wander in the desert without setting foot on the Promised Land, without rebuilding Yavne and Jerusalem. This was a fear that the experience of the first years in Palestine would confirm, as we will see. Bergmann made clear to Buber the risk that they all ran, if they did not take that step toward reality, a risk run by even Buber himself, who had led them that far: namely the risk that the pace of events "would simply overtake us because we have been left behind, left half-way and are old. When instead we could and should be leaders."[103] This appeal essentially fell on deaf ears: Buber stayed in Germany until 1938 and only then travelled to Jerusalem, and the legendary Buberian group in Prague was dismantled: from 1918, Robert Weltsch[104] was the editor and publisher in Berlin of the important official journal of German Zionism, "Jüdische Rundschau," and was to emigrate to Palestine in 1939, but he only stayed there a few years and intermittently. Hans Kohn went to Palestine in 1925 but did not stay long—he emigrated to the United States in 1934, disappointed and embittered—Leo Hermann did not travel there until 1926.

Only Bergmann was ready to take the step of leaving the desert to set foot in the Promised Land. As an interim solution, after much reflection, in the summer of 1919 he accepted the position of Secretary of the Cultural Section of the Zionist Organization based in London. But the compass showed another destination and in May 1920 Bergmann moved to Jerusalem with his wife Else and his children Shlomo, Martin, and Chawa with the aim of helping to found the Hebrew University that Buber had been calling for since 1902, and building its Library. He died there in 1975.

"I have to tell you" he wrote to his friends at "Selbstwehr," the journal of Bar Kochba, "how happy one can be in Eretz Yisrael."[105] There are concerns, he added, but there are moments of pure happiness and he stressed that it was only possible to come to grips with the country by knowing Hebrew. A few months later, though, in a letter to Robert Weltsch—who became a kind of confidant and alter ego, a bridge with Europe, in the years when the Zionist project was forced to come to terms with reality—he did not conceal the difficulties and confessed bitterly: "We are stuck here on a lonely island in the sea and we often feel surrounded by enemies on all sides, because no one understands our ways, the interior difficulties that we, racked by nostalgia as we are, must face, between German and Hebrew, between Czech and Hebrew. We are merely 'the Germans.'"[106] In Hapoel Hatzair,[107] the non-Marxist workers' party, whose affairs he followed with interest and to which he felt close, "you can only find impersonal relationships, not the atmosphere of

feelings and love without which one cannot live. . . . There is nothing worse than this Palestinian solitude. . . . It would be a thousand times better and even make things easier if we could work together here on something, if we could create. We are seized by veritable fits of rage at the thought that you will not join us." He went on to conclude: "You must not think that we are broken by the crisis. This was true a few weeks ago, but the Country is too beautiful and everyone's work might be tiring and thankless but is nevertheless too *real* and too entrenched for us to let ourselves be killed."[108] These early Palestinian confessions were marked by light and shade, interior discouragement alternated with optimism of the will, the feeling of working on something real, attachment to a land that was "beautiful," while his hopes were challenged by a difficult, tough reality. Our task in these pages will be to try and understand if and to what extent Bergmann's "great dream" actually came true in the light of the first years he spent living in Palestine, at that early stage, when he still had very strong links with his original background and the Zionist project drawn up in Prague in a world of German language and culture. It is outside the scope of this book to explore the fully Palestinian or Israeli space that the author went on to occupy: we cannot explore this and have no wish to. A confession that he made soon afterwards, again to Weltsch, is revealing of this difficult transition stage: "I cannot use anything here of what I learned from Buber and Landauer. The thing that is missing here is a bridge between the small and yet real things of life and the great ideals that we made our own."[109] He could not therefore find a link between yesterday and the present day, between the great ethical and religious project they had put together in Prague, in old Europe, and the daily reality of the old new land, where the debates, he said, lacked direction and a basis. "The hard part has nothing to do with our bodies," even though in Europe they had imagined that the physical work would be much more difficult, "the difficult thing is conducting an intimate and unconditional life with people who are strangers."[110] It was not, therefore, the physical difficulty of adapting to an external and material reality that was so far from European comforts and habits—the food in Prague was excellent, he observed, "but I'm still happy with our proletarian life."[111] The thing that weighed him down was the psychological alienation, the inner loneliness, the lack of that circle of emotions and thoughts that had been the watchword of his youth in Prague. This loneliness was exacerbated by his insufficient knowledge of Hebrew. He said he knew a few hundred words and he struggled to express himself because, he noted, the thing that mattered was the nuances.[112] He felt ignorant of Judaism and he confessed to being an *Am Haarez* in this context, in other words an ignoramus who could no longer make up for what he had not learned when young.[113] When commenting on a criticism that he believed to be fairly directed against the Jewish aspirations of their Buberian circle, he told his friend: "It is only here and now that I feel how much all this was and

is superficial. Superficial in its essence and literary in its aspirations. Only Palestine can heal us and make us realists."[114] He had come face to face with something for which he had already reproached Buber, when urging him to take the plunge and leave for Palestine, in other words the literariness of their aspirations, and was now aware of the need to take a reality check. Which did not mean denying themselves. With things as they were, if he was destined to play the role of *Außenseiter* when it came to literature written in the Hebrew language, he could still offer a knowledge of things it could not know, such as Hegel. This was not a bad thing, he avowed, because the Jewish culture, in Hebrew, needs to open up to the world, it must open up to what is happening outside and certainly cannot ignore the European culture. His position was therefore highly critical of the intellectual, bookish approach to Judaism he had grown up with in his youth: he was dissatisfied with his knowledge of Jewish tradition and world—the Jewish world before Bialik[115] was a closed book for him and the world after Bialik was only half-way open.[116] On the other hand, he was aware that his role could be that of a mediator, of keeping open a window to the outside world and he realized how necessary this openness to the world and what was happening outside was to the burgeoning new Jewish intelligentsia. The culture that the Jews of Palestine were shaping had to concern Jews as men, in accordance with the teachings of Berdichevsky, which Bergmann had already assimilated. In a wider sense, this choice was also a clear legacy of his European background and the Enlightenment culture of which Bergmann was a product.[117] It should not be forgotten that, especially at this early stage, he still hoped that Palestine could flower into the spiritual center of Judaism, namely become a benchmark for the diaspora and thus communicate with the whole world. His cultural decision to move toward universalism was also very important in the light of the specific role that Bergmann was called upon to perform in Jerusalem, which was initially as Director of the brand-new National Jewish Library (which was to become the National and University Library). Later, in 1925, he also played a crucial role in founding the University of Jerusalem, where he taught philosophy from 1928, becoming Professor in 1935 and then Rector from 1935 to 1938. Building the Library and University of the new Yishuv[118] meant making specific cultural choices: the basic choice was whether the Library and University should be aimed only at the Jews of Palestine or also at Jews outside Palestine and humanity in general, not rejecting the European culture. The risk—understandable given the need to build a new Jewish identity and encourage even adult immigrants to learn the new language of the Yishuv, Hebrew—was that of remaining focused exclusively on Jewish culture.[119] Bergmann, together with other intellectuals of central European or U.S. origin—such as the reformed rabbi Hans Jehuda Magnes, who was President of the University—and intellectuals such as Gershom Scholem to whom we will return in the next chapter—fought to

ensure that the University was a living cultural institution, open to other languages and cultures with an outlook of tolerance and not of fanaticism and opportunities for interaction and dialogue between Arabs and Jews with a view to building bridges, not walls, between people. The *Bildung* dream was that the University should be an educational province that continued in the land of their fathers. This was partly because Bergmann believed that, to allow young people in the new Yishuv to be educated in the new reality of the language and the country, the culture and knowledge had to be developed in Hebrew but also in a universal language, and he saw this as a job for the University.[120]

It therefore comes as no surprise to learn that he led his life with a view to a continuous process of learning, of individuation—an approach that Bergmann was to continue until his twilight years—in which he observed himself immersed in the new Palestinian reality, and he went into analysis in order to gain a better understanding of this reality and himself. He took stock of things at the beginning of 1921, and noted in a diary entry: "I have begun to organise the library with all my energy and I feel that the energy is not wasted for this country."[121] The country allowed him to "expand my knowledge of the Hebrew language, making it come alive and this, for me, is not something external as with another language, but it is a part of my soul that I painfully struggle to conquer with each new term."[122] And he continued: "For me, working on something is the same thing as working for myself. I have the happy sensation of working in continuous harmony and every step that I achieve in the library is made with a sense of delighted awareness: you are building, you are building something! The thing the country has not given me is a circle of action,"[123] a target community where one can feel not too different from the others. This was the foreignness he complained of earlier, a foreignness due to his strong German or central European imprinting, the type of expectations with which he had arrived, shaped by the cultural atmosphere of Prague and Buber, for better or worse, which would often make him feel like an outsider, or *Außenseiter*, compared to the other members of the Yishuv. This isolation was not only felt by Bergmann but also by the very small, albeit culturally significant, enclave of German-speaking Jewish intelligentsia in Palestine who, as we shall see, were affected by the very fact that their Judaism and, in some cases, their Zionism, was largely the product or expression of German culture and not a predominantly or solely Jewish culture.

Now we must take a step back, to address the crucial issue of the relationship with the Arabs of Palestine, a problem that was to exercise Bergmann greatly and eventually, as we know, led to a dramatic unfolding of events.

The Balfour Declaration, whereby in 1917 Britain declared itself in favor of establishing a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, acknowledged the Zionist aspirations for Palestine. During the early years of the

British Mandate—which lasted from 1920 to 1948—Jewish immigration into the country accelerated sharply, while the Jewish Agency poured its efforts into buying land on which the new Jewish settlements could become established. Mid-way through the 1930s, the Jews accounted for some 30 percent of the population, compared to 10 percent twenty years earlier. This high immigration in a land with limited resources, combined with an increase in unemployment among the Arab population, led to numerous clashes between the Arab majority and the settlers. These clashes also affected Jewish settlements that pre-dated the wave of migration of that period.

Bergmann was in Palestine during the bloody clashes between the Arabs and Jews in Jaffa in May 1921, clashes that also extended to other areas of the country, eventually causing 95 deaths and 219 serious injuries. Whatever the causes of the uprising, which are not entirely clear, this made the Zionists aware for the first time of the danger of a serious conflict between Arabs and Jews.[124] Bergmann commented on the events with Weltsch, and also in the pages of "Selbstwehr" and reflected more generally on the relationship between Arabs and Jews in "Freie Zionistische Blätter." Through this and other collaborations, he maintained a living link with the Zionist movement abroad, with the diaspora and with Europe. Bergmann's analysis of events was somewhat complex and often in line with the stance adopted by Buber at the same time on Palestine, on the relationship with Britain, on the risks associated with an unscrupulous *Realpolitik*, and on the Arab question.[125] On the one hand, Bergmann pointed out that the Jews in Palestine could not rely on mainstream politics or on Britain, which did not defend or support the Jews and was even prepared, under Arab pressure, to limit Jewish immigration. On the other hand, Bergmann said he was in favor of limiting immigration because the situation in the country had to be dealt with.

> A limit to immigration," he wrote to Weltsch, "would not be objectively wrong: we could not actually carry on like this. We were at the point of creating a new society of parasites which, as in the countries of the Galut, would live parasitically on the existing economy. Our emigration has pushed up the prices of housing and food, but not the country's productivity.[126]

This statement should be read bearing in mind that the thing he felt most deeply about was creating a new society or community in Palestine based not on the spirit of capitalism but on solidarity, relying on a spiritual regeneration of the Jew through integration with the land and its inhabitants. He then went on to reprove the Zionist leadership who had become blinded by political success in the past without worrying about the settlement problems closer to home, and added: "The Arabs were despised and an Arab policy was not felt to be necessary."[127] He also claimed that the Arab problem was mainly economic: "If the Jewish workers at the port of Jaffa had not driven back the

Arab dock workers . . . the Arabs in Jaffa would not have felt so bitter."[128] This position was at odds with the Zionist majority of the Yishuv, which aimed to use exclusively Jewish labor in order to absorb immigration into the country and promote Jewish "regeneration" through labor. Bergmann believed that the dialogue between Arabs and Jews had to begin by working together: a partnership and not an apartheid. We need facts, not policies, he wrote in "Freie Zionistische Blätter." Policies divide, facts unite. The hard part, he observed in the article, is that the Palestinian policy is totally negative: "No Jews."[129] And so he wondered: "Do we want to import the weight of Jewish hatred to Palestine as well? It seems so, and yet the relationships are completely different. In Europe, we are economically superfluous, profiteers, parasites. In Palestine we have created something, even if not yet to a decisive extent. The Yishuv is supported by the productive labor of the settlers. We have brought value into the country. We can help the Arabs as no nation has ever before helped another. We can drain the swamps, clean them up, set up schools, even for Arabs . . . , hospitals, libraries, museums, that Arabs can use too. And still this hatred."[130] Bergmann felt that this hate also fed on the national egoism that demanded a Jewish majority, in other words "supremacy, supremacy!"[131] But these were only high-sounding proclamations, not deeds. The Arabs were not annoyed by the work of the Jews in Palestine but by the statements that seemed to stand behind every immigrant: "The tragedy actually lies in the words."[132] What can be done? "Political Zionism must make way for a top-level, practical Zionism,"[133] because "words divide. Deeds unite."[134]

This was a fair-minded and balanced assessment of a conflict that was only just beginning, but it did not hide the seriousness of the facts. He warned that the greatest risk was blindness: "We are blind to the Arabs just as we were blind to the Czechs in Bohemia when we saw only Vienna and the Germans,"[135] he wrote to his friend Robert. The thing that consoles him is the work of the pioneers, the *chalutzim*, as he wrote to his friend:

> I find infinite consolation in the individual people I meet. The truly substantial and profound purity that I see in our *chalutzim* is difficult to define and if we believe, as we should, that the goodness of the world must not be lost but *must* act, we can hope that something really big is happening here in spite of everything. I believe that the average man is infinitely higher here than anywhere else. . . . The great upwelling of purity, of greatness, is here and will not let itself to be taken away, it is an accomplished fact, if not here on earth, certainly in the metaphysical. The Jews have put forth this sacred spring, this aliyah[136] with their last drop of strength and whether this aliyah succeeds or not from a practical point of view is therefore only of secondary importance compared to this *deed*. We have always said, and we must repeat, that there is a spiritual world that retains a trace even of what is transient here.[137]

His hopes therefore went out to the work of the pioneers, who understood Zionism in the spirit of common work relating to the ideal of the collective life of the community, whereby settlement of the land of Israel was accompanied by the achievement of ethical and social ideals, the "economy of justice" we have already spoken of. In Eretz Yisrael it would be possible to achieve the longed-for synthesis between Yavne and Jerusalem, between the spirit and the land, between the soul and the body of Judaism.

"The present and the future are decisive," he wrote in his diaries, "action is decisive. Epic action, if we are capable of it. . . . Here the work of Buber ends and that of the pioneers begins."[138] He observed in 1920 that the *chalutzim* and the Palestinian workers had begun to listen and relate to the reality of the land. This was evident in their commitment to a cooperative undertaking, which was not the result of ideology but a different way of understanding labor and the relationship of man with labor, man with man, than in a capitalist undertaking. Unlike the latter, a cooperative undertaking sets out to achieve not mere profit but the creation of labor, man's fullfilment and elevation through labor and also through education and teaching.[139] If all this were to be defeated—a defeat that would concern not only the workers of Palestine but all humanity—this would not devalue the undertaking. "Defeat of an idea," he would write, "is not evidence against this idea, the idea itself cannot disappoint because it is not of this world."[140]

In a letter to Leo Hermann, his one-time friend, written on 19 July 1922, following the publication of the White Paper,[141] which after the Jaffa riots of 1921 restricted the area allocated to the Jewish homeland and imposed financial conditions on Jewish immigration, Bergmann reiterated that he had never been that keen on the Balfour Declaration and was not therefore disappointed in it now, and he explained: "I have never seen Zionism as a complete solution but rather, if not a spiritual centre (which today is meaningless, since there is no longer any Jewish spirit, there is no longer any spirit of Judaism), then nothing more than a strong national [community?] like the centres of Jewish people in America or in Poland, with the only difference that here we hope to develop our own culture and perhaps become closer to the East."[142] Bergmann was now seeing a great scaling-down of aspirations to build a spiritual center in Palestine and believed it was important to establish a distance from Britain and become closer to the East, which certainly to his European eyes also represented a primordial and resurgent force compared to the decadent West and in this undoubtedly lay (as Ratzabi pointed out) the influence of Spengler[143] and more generally the *fin de siècle* culture which saw the East as an alternative world to the tired and depleted West, and there was also the influence of Buber, who believed that the Jews were eastern.[144] Yet the East now also meant the Arab world and Bergmann seemed here to be thinking about the integration of the Palestinian Jews into a wider Arab context, defining Zionism as "a bridge between West and

East,"[145] an isolated position in the Yishuv and also one that went unheard by the Arabs of Palestine. In the desired fulfilment of Zionism, the thing dearest to his heart was peaceful and constructive coexistence with the Arabs of Palestine, also reiterated in a letter to Weltsch, written in August 1924, in the wake of renewed episodes of intolerance by Arabs against some Jews:

> If something can still be salvaged from this chaos, for our part we must now make an unqualified call with all our might for a radical change in Zionist policy: go with the Arabs! . . . we must create a front that fights the mixture of Zionism and British imperialism. . . . We must be aware that even if today's Palestine becomes completely Arabic and part of the Arabian peninsula and Saudi Arabia, we will not give up our Zionist hopes and we will seek to achieve Zionism through Mecca as before we did through Constantinople."[146]

Bergmann's stance was averse to *Realpolitik*, to any idea of mastery and supremacy and instead aimed to build bridges between Arabs and Jews in an attempt to combine Zionism and humanism, nationalism and cosmopolitanism, which could only be achieved through deeds, as he said, building real opportunities for cooperation and interaction between Arabs and Jews at work and in cultural and personal contacts, and not through a top-down policy of power, which is how he saw Britain's policy. This is the explanation for his active militancy in the Brit Shalom[147] or Covenant of Peace group, an association set up in 1925 in Jerusalem by Arthur Ruppin, rooted in German or central European Zionism,[148] as evidenced by the intellectuals who sponsored it, namely Martin Buber, Robert Weltsch, Hans Kohn, Hans Jehuda Magnes, the American reformed rabbi, Ernst Simon, and Gershom Scholem as well as Bergmann himself.[149] In accordance with the 1922 White Paper on the emigration restrictions in Eretz Yisrael, Brit Shalom presented itself as a peaceful organization, capable of achieving, theoretically, if not politically, the construction of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine—not of a State. Due to matters of principle that were chiefly moral, it strove to seek an agreement with the Arab population through peaceful negotiations and not by force of arms, working toward a binational solution that would see both peoples cooperating for a common life under the British Mandate. Brit Shalom was driven by the idea that the country's future and the construction of a national homeland for the Jews could be assured only on the basis of harmonious, mutual influence and integration and it therefore aimed for a binational solution, a land for two peoples as inspired by Buber.[150] Both peoples had to be considered because this was what was right according to the ethical message or mission of Judaism, and also because rejecting the aspirations of the Arab people of Palestine would mean condemning everyone to perpetual war. A binational solution, in which neither of the two peoples could claim priority over the other was, in the opinion of Brit Shalom, the only way to build an acceptable Jewish sovereignty over a strip of

the Holy Land.[151] Bergmann was also subsequently to relate these prospects of binationalism to his experience of Prague, where "three peoples, Czechs, Germans and Jews lived together and despite all their differences, they lived *together*."[152] What has been imposed on us is not a concession but a great historical role, Bergmann wrote after the publication of the White Paper in1922, a blessing that God has bestowed on the same land to two peoples.[153] As he had already explained in his first trip to Palestine, the acid test of the Jewish nature of Zionism would be the relationship between the Jews and the Arabs. And if, as he had again stated in 1913, every form of moral behavior toward non-Jews is evidence of sanctifying the Name, then it is clear that Zionism must act morally toward non-Jews, making the world divine through its actions and freeing every human being from alienation. The non-Jew neighbors whom the Jews in Eretz Yisrael would face were the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews' moral relationship with them would demonstrate whether Zionism was the sanctification of the Name. This position was not predicated on the abstract but on facts: Bergmann, who began to study Arabic, tried to build bridges even in everyday life, as is evident from a letter to Weltsch, in which he spoke about the director of a seminary for Arabic lecturers who borrowed the works of Freud and Jung from the library and commented: "Sometimes I have the sensation that we here (*in the library, author's note*) break down the walls that exist between men and create a human place instead of fanaticism."[154]

The militancy in Brit Schalom, and in general the daily good fight in the name of the ethical and spiritual mission of Zionism can also be interpreted as a continuation of the educational and cultural work within the Jewish community begun in Prague, which was now focused on the reality of Yishuv: while before their task had been to sow the seeds of Jewish culture in the Galut, now it became that of sowing the seeds of an open, humanist Jewish culture that was neither chauvinist nor inward-looking itself in Eretz Yisrael.

In the second half of the 1920s, with the fourth aliyah, the type of immigrant arriving in Eretz Yisrael changed. For the third aliyah, Zionism had been a matter of conscience; now with the fourth aliyah, which came largely from Poland, the Jews were emigrating to Eretz Yisrael to improve their living conditions. This aliyah was no longer selective but *petit bourgeois*, finding its ideological and political expression in the revisionism of Vladimir Jabotinskij[155]—which we will return to in the next chapter. This inspired fear in those who, like Bergmann, understood Zionism as a spiritual, cultural and social renewal of the Jewish people and was an aliyah that in the eyes of Gershom Scholem would even prove, as we shall see, a harbinger of misfortune. Bergmann, who continued to follow the development of the country closely, without any prejudice, stated that he could not believe, among other things, that for a Jew "changing over to proletarian but productive work is

always a sacrifice. . . . When the *Luftmensch*[156] Jew is driven into productive work—even when this is for an Arab—this is progress."[157] He participated in the trade union association and followed it with interest, playing an important role in the Histadrut, the Zionist trade union of Jewish workers, and political associations of the non-Marxist workers' party Hapoel Hatzair, considering it the closest to his ideals—as he had in Prague in his youth—driven by the idea that Zionism would help form the spirit and practice of a new society. "If we," he wrote, "tie the fate of Palestine to the formation of a new society, as we do, then it is clearly important that even people who work in the city and who hold a large part of our destiny in their hands should be imbued with the spirit of a new society."[158] Bergmann was a product of *fin de siècle* romantic anti-capitalism and he found the growth of cities problematical, fearing that one could be absorbed by the capitalist pace of life and spirit, but he also believed that cities were essential to the development and growth of the country and that they could fulfill tasks that no other form of education could perform. He noted in this regard that there were even some who "after a year living in the city became the same type of man that we used to see in Europe. The enormous drive that had carried him to Palestine to begin a new life has been lost."[159] And he wondered: "how is it possible that many hundreds of city inhabitants who once arrived in Palestine and then experienced its greatness have become *petite bourgeoisie* here?"[160] He hoped that the kwuza, the form of small collectivist settlements of which Degania and Kinneret, founded in 1909, were the first two examples would become established even in the cities and, even in the knowledge that "a communal life can only be lived in the countryside,"[161] he hoped for cooperation and interaction between the kvutzot of the town centers and those of the countryside, which would be of benefit to both: for the city inhabitants it would mean liberation from capitalism and its materialist spirit, for the rural inhabitants, it would mean emerging from their isolation. As may be appreciated from these observations Bergmann thought deeply about the social achievements of Zionism, the formation of a new society based on cooperation and solidarity, and a spirit of enterprise tied to an ideal and social community project. Zionism and the renewal project bound to it had to be specifically implemented in relations between men and change those relationships.

As the Director of the Library, he realized that the processing and use of culture and reading by the generation that was growing up in Palestine was very far from that he knew from central Europe and Germany—his book on Kant, published in 1927, did not find the success it deserved—and he looked on this change with willingness but also with concern, with just apprehension.[162] Even in Palestine, the thing that he was committed to was working in the present, a work that was also and above all educational and cultural:

> "I am coming to realise more and more that all the work in Palestine will be in vain," he wrote to Weltsch in October 1928, "if we do not give *books* to young people. It is clear that young people who only read a few newspapers will fall prey to the first madman or trickster who comes along. We will save the young people here if we give them the opportunity to acquire European thoughts, instead of the slogans of this far-flung corner with its 100,000 people. Here your soul is forced to shrink due to undernourishment: who can say whether the same people who are here in Betar[163] would not have been ideal youngsters in Bar Kochba. And Bar Kochba is unthinkable without Fichte, Landauer, Buber, and without the myriad cultural influences that are simply missing here. . . . When our European generation has withdrawn, the young people here will be like the ones in Baghdad or some other place, if we do not use all our resources to offer them spiritual nourishment."[164]

His concern about falling short of the fundamental value of *Bildung* was to accompany him throughout his life, even in later years, when he regretted the fact that the young people in Israel no longer spoke German and thus shut themselves off from understanding a great culture—his philosophy course at the University consisted, as we know, of an introduction to German culture and philosophy—and also from any knowledge of the world and the German-Jewish culture of the last two centuries, expressed in German, which was a kind of lingua franca in central European intellectual Judaism.[165] This attachment and loyalty to the German culture and its home world—also reflected by the fact that he often entered the birthday of Emperor Franz Joseph in his diaries—undoubtedly cost him some isolation in the Yishuv. Even if it must have brought him prestige and recognition from the small enclave of intellectual German and central European Jews active at the University, relegated to the lofty heights of Mount Scopus, it would undoubtedly mean marginalisation and powerlessness to have an impact on and force a change in the cultural events and choices of the Yishuv, something of which he would always be aware. "Here in Palestine we are of no importance, we are 'nulls' as they say here," he wrote to his friend Robert on 20 July 1927, after Buber's visit to Palestine, "and we have backed ourselves into a corner."[166] He also saw this position in its critical aspects, as he wrote to Weltsch on 17 July 1928:

> I have the feeling that we are all too negative and in a certain sense we live off the stupidity and the chauvinism of others, seeking to combat them. We are too negative about the country and the Jewish culture, we are really like "Kuntress,"[167] the uprooted. Our spiritual lives are in Germany and not here. . . . our Jewish education was inadequate and this is one of the worst evils of our relationship with Palestine.[168]

His position took account of the value of his Jewish-German heritage and of *Bildung*, yet did not ignore the burden of this legacy with regard to the new

duties, to a reality different from that of central Europe, to challenges and difficulties concerned with building the country and addressing the historical problems that lay before the Yishuv. As we will see in the course of the book, this Yishuv mainly consisted of Jews emigrated from eastern Europe and Russia, who did not look favorably on the small outpost of German Jews now resident in the old new land. The arrival of Buber in Eretz Yisrael for a few weeks in April 1927 was a time of great emotional and cultural resonance. Bergmann noted in his diary and letters the strong emotional impact that the Master of his youth and of his generation aroused in him, just when he believed he had managed to tear himself away and distance himself. Instead, Buber made a big impression on him with his withering remarks about the country and the condition of the people, and Bergmann reported some particularly significant remarks in a letter to Robert: "We entered the house of another man, in which some rooms were empty, without speaking to him."[169] Buber had no specific agenda, but now called on everyone to "love the country and serve it in all humility."[170]

Buber's visit increased in Bergmann the feeling that the Zionist project, which he and his generation had formulated, had failed: "Zionism," he wrote on 29 December 1927, "has now become a totally alienated movement. . . . I do not believe there are 20 people in all the Yishuv who understand a religious issue. The political movement stirred a real spiritual devastation amongst the Jews."[171] Harsh words directed at political Zionism, and the Zionist policy which, as we shall see later, were to be echoed with even greater strength and desperation by Scholem. Those words were also specifically addressed to the political leadership of the Yishuv, who during those years were engaged in the construction of pre-State[172] structures and infrastructures and were not very sensitive, apart from tactically, to the spiritual message borne by German Zionism.[173] And those words were certainly addressed to Jabotinsky's revisionist party, which advocated an openly nationalist and chauvinist Zionism, an aggressive and military Zionism that fought for the natural borders of Israel on both banks of the Jordan and for numerical supremacy of the Jews in Palestine—the famous matter of the "majority"—in the belief that the main goal of Zionism was not to build a national home but a Jewish State. Zionism, as Bergmann understood and practiced it, was not a movement for messianic and political redemption and for solving the Jewish question—Bergmann would never underestimate the value and importance of exile[174]—but a movement for the cultural and spiritual renaissance of the Jewish people who set out to build their spiritual center in the land of Israel without aspiring to political rule, a movement that had no thoughts of having to become a majority to crush the Arab minority. This form of Zionism would not, in his opinion, have found it difficult to agree with the other side, the Arabs.[175] Unsurprisingly, in some reflections on the constitution and the parliament of the future Palestine, Bergmann showed

himself to be careful and anxious to emphasize the crucial importance of uniting and not dividing Arabs and Jews, Arab workers and Jewish workers. The purpose of a Constitution and a Parliament under the British Mandate should have been to open up opportunities for cooperation, creating spaces of understanding, not division between the two peoples, even if the Jewish side had to give something up. Bergmann believed that what they would have had to give up would be more apparent than substantial, because the Jews had to guard against the illusion of a fictitious victory, a pyrrhic victory with regard to the Arab question.[176] As he was to emphasize to Escha Scholem, Gershom's wife, who supported him and helped him with his work in the library,[177] there was a need to de-Europeanize Zionism, namely strip it of everything that was merely political—Bergmann saw every political solution as actually a materialistic solution, an external solution[178]—the entire struggle for power, everything that is imprisoned in matter, all the remains of European ideology linked to the concept of a national language and of a State. Zionism had to have a spiritual sense of the material life, it had to be Jewish in a sense that was not restricted but linked to the essence of Judaism.[179] Such beliefs were few and far between in most of the Yischuv, which was dominated by politics and engaged at that very time, as we already said, in prefiguring and building a kind of pre-State, as Bensoussan[180] wrote.

In a letter sent to Buber on 31 January 1928, on the latter's fiftieth birthday, Bergmann drew up a kind of gloomy, bitter balance sheet.

> I do not wish to pass over in silence the way that we, on your birthday, feel more than ever how *little* our generation has achieved, how we, by wandering in vain to find a way, we cross the desert. We do not have a clear relationship to Palestine, Zionism or tradition, and the reason our influence on our contemporaries is so weak is because the nature of the Judaism that we have built is very incomplete and because we cannot see our way in crucial matters.[181]

The image he conjures up of the desert is freighted with meaning in the Jewish tradition and the closest image is that of the Jews who came out of Egypt and wandered in the desert for forty years before they set foot in the Promised Land. He therefore portrayed his generation as one that had not yet arrived in Eretz Yisrael but had become lost in the desert sands, between what was gone and what was yet to be in a prolonged exile, despite having apparently been reunited with the Land. He continued to hope that one day, in the not too distant future, they could find their way together united as a group, but he could not be certain: "Today there is no answer to the question 'what is Zionism?'"[182] This was a good question and, as we will see in the next chapter, very similar to the questions asked by Gershom Scholem at around the same time.

This unease and disorientation undoubtedly came about from an awareness of the objective difference between a project and its realization, between

the utopian ideals of his youth and the harsh reality of the present. This awareness also sparked reflection on the years that were decisive for those who had also specifically understood Zionism as a utopian spirit, a spiritual Zionism, like building a national home, of course, but particularly in the sense of building an exemplary Jewish cultural center for the diaspora. In retrospect, the thought occurs that it was no coincidence that Bergmann devoted particular attention to Moses in his youth, as if he already had a presentiment of or feared the same fate, privilege, burden, or responsibility of prophesying but not setting foot in the Promised Land.

The serious clashes between Arabs and Jews that erupted in 1929 over the matter of both parties' rights over the Wailing Wall,[183] clashes that spread across the country, as we shall see in the next chapter, and led to the deaths of 133 Jews, 68 of whom were massacred in Hebron, deeply shocked the Yischuv and clearly indicated a need for a new direction. Britain, as the colonial power, had neither the interest nor the desire to bring Arabs and Jews together. Arab policy, for its part, was intent on drowning the creation of a national Jewish home in Palestine in blood. In the same way, Zionist policy did not show a proper understanding of the Arab question, which was essential to the country's future. This was the gist of the document that Brit Shalom published in "Haaretz" and in "Jüdische Rundschau" in the aftermath of the riots. It read as follows: "Only through mutual understanding and specific consideration of the legitimate aspirations of Arabs and Jews will it be possible to resolve [the Palestinian question] . . . . It is clear that neither Jews nor Arabs can live in this country as though they were living on different islands. We have therefore always endeavoured to find a bridge to promote understanding. Brit Shalom calls on all the leaders to do everything they can to restore peaceful relations and pave the way for direct negotiations."[184] Bergmann, who was in Europe at the time of the riots, was deeply shocked by events and concerned about the uncontrollable explosion of violence by the Arab side. He wrote to Weltsch: "It is a mystery to me how we in Palestine can imagine going on until matters stand like this between the two peoples."[185] Events in Palestine followed thick and fast. For Brit Shalom, it was a period of intense discussion on the need for cooperation between Arabs and Jews—Brit Shalom's grassroots call unfortunately fell on deaf ears as far as the Zionist side and the Arab side were concerned. One of the reasons, as Pappe observed, was because at that time and during the intervening years, the two meta-identities of Palestine at the time of the Mandate—"the Zionist and the Arab-Palestinian"—were being constructed from the top down.[186] The consequences of the 1929 riots were also, on the British side, a reconsideration of British policy in Palestine that resulted in the publication of the second White Paper in 1930. This dealt with the Jewish immigration problem by establishing new restrictive measures that were effectively implemented in the 1930s.[187]

For us, however, the time has come to take leave of Bergmann, leaving him on his difficult path, but not without remembering his words full of hope and optimism: "We should not let ourselves be swayed too much by political events: everything will seem very different in twenty, twenty-five years. But what I try to do spiritually in Palestine will not be destroyed."[188]

In 1967, when the Six-Day War was just over and many years and events had gone by since those far-off days, Bergmann republished his essay *The Sanctification of the Name*, which originally came out in 1913, when he was young, in the legendary, mythical collected work by Bar Kochba, *Vom Judentum*. In the accompanying note, which was actually a heartfelt spiritual testament, a vibrant appeal to the younger generation, Bergmann wrote:

> Then I knew nothing of life, I did not know how difficult the Sanctification of the Name would be in real life, particularly political life. And I ask myself: is what I wrote then invalid because of my lack of experience? I do not think so. Instead, we must now ask ourselves: has the thought to which the young writer gave expression at that time come true, has Zionism become the Sanctification of the Name?[189]

The problem with the sanctification of the world or the depletion of the world's holiness is an intrinsic problem that remains open. Bergmann knew only too well that there could be no answer to his question and it could only be continuously mulled over, but he also knew that it could ultimately only be asked at that juncture. Many years had gone by since that essay and also since his early years in Palestine marked by a strongly ambivalent relationship with the reality of Eretz Yisrael and also his own youth and its ideals. Yet those ideals had now been developed over the course of a lifetime, tempered by experience, tested by reality, in the attempt to synthesize Yavne and Jerusalem. The world had also changed profoundly, the new international political balances were different, the spiritual and historical horizons had been overturned, partly as a result of Auschwitz. Nothing was or could ever be as it was before. He was only able to ask that question, the question of his life, at that juncture because he was not questioning only himself and the friends of his youth: he was questioning future readers, new generations: "Dear reader, the fate of this historical age is in your hands, it is up to you to decide, through your conduct with other people, whether Zionism is a form of nationalism as that of 'all peoples,' or if we can still say today: Zionism is the sanctification of the Name,"[190] namely, whether Zionism is a form of assimilation or, instead, if it is a religious and ethical movement that lights the path to holiness. Bergmann was nevertheless well aware that Zionism, the sanctification of the Name, cannot be accomplished by a single generation. Instead, regardless of the outcome, it is destined to be the work of generations—every generation being called upon to contribute its own efforts

and resources to building a holy future. This is the problem everyone faces, and not only in Eretz Yisrael.

NOTES

1. Bergmann was referring to celebrated episodes of Jewish history that involved a clash between two concepts of the "Jewish nation." In 70 AD the Jews, led by Yochanan Ben Zakai, who were leaving Jerusalem after the destruction of the second temple by Vespasian and Titus to withdraw to Yavne, a safe place tolerated by the Romans, to study the Torah, and the struggle that took place in 135 AD between the zealots rebelling against Rome, led by Bar Kochba, who were fighting on the walls of Jerusalem, under siege by the Romans. By extension, Yavne, as opposed to Jerusalem, was synonymous with a spiritual and ethical diasporic Judaism, rather than a political and national Judaism. These two images of Judaism fueled the intellectual disputes within Zionism.

Yavne and Jerusalem is, tellingly, the title chosen by Bergmann for his collection of essays.

On the problem of the two concepts see a recent and significant contribution by G. Bensoussan, *Zionism: A Political and Intellectual History 1860–1940*, volume one, Italian translation by M. Guerra, Einaudi, Turin 2007, in particular p. 466, and M. Brenner, *A Brief History of the Jews*, Italian translation by P. Scotini, Donzelli, Rome, 2009, spec. p. 47.

2. H. Bergmann, *Vorwort*, in Id., *Jawne und Jerusalem, Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Jüdischer Verlag, Berlin 1919, p. 46.

3. H. Bergmann, *Die Entwicklung der Jüdischen Bewegung* (1916), in Id., *Jawne und Jerusalem*, cit., pp. 47–48.

4. H.J. Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry. National Conflict and Jewish Society in Bohemia 1870–1918*, Oxford University Press, New York-Oxford 1988, p. 100. For a portrait of *fin de siècle* Prague, see the contribution of H. Tramer, *Die Dreivölkerstadt Prag, in Robert Weltsch. Zum 70.Geburtstag von Seinen Freunden*, edited by H. Tramer and K. Loewenstein, Verlag Bitaon, Tel Aviv 1961, pp. 138–203.

5. See H. J. Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry*, cit., p. 100.

6. D. Shumsky, *Zweisprachgkeit und binationale Idee. Der Prager Zionismus 1900–1930*, Vandehoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2013, particularly pp. 39–49.

7. *Ibid*., p. 72.

8. See H. J. Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry*, cit., p. 100, and D. Shumsky, *Zweisprachigkeit und binationale Idee*, cit., p. 78. In 1958, in an unofficial meeting, Bergmann himself effectively sketched the multicultural atmosphere of Prague, the harmony between three cultures—German, Czech, and Jewish—which had shaped him and had only been broken apart by the late arrival of nationalism in the nineteenth century. And he remembered how that culture of synthesis had influenced the Jews of Prague, rendering them capable of developing a form of Zionism that was entirely specific, still living and working in Palestine/Israel decades later and which found its expression in "embracing and developing the foreign element: this openness toward different opinions, peoples, cultures and ideas, this unity in multiplicity and the legacy we have carried with us and that here we feel obliged to carry forward." In D. Shumsky, *Zweisprachigkeit und binationale Idee*, cit., p. 90.

9. S. Spector, *Another Zionism: Hugo Bergmann's Circumscription of Spiritual Territory*, in "Journal of Contemporary History," Sage Publications, London-Thousand Oaks, New Delhi 1999, Vol. 341, p. 89.

10. See S. Spector, *Another Zionism,* cit., *passim*.

11. D. Shumsky, *Zweisprachigkeit und binationale Idee*, cit., p. 109.

12. M. Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, Vol. 1: 1897–1918, with a foreword by E. Simon and biographical notes as an introduction by G. Schaeder, Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg 1972, p. 269.

13. H. Bergmann, *Brief an einen Dichter* (1917), in Id., *Jawne und Jerusalem*, cit., p. 53.

14. See S. Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism. The Radical Circle in Brit Schalom* 1925–1933, Brill, Leiden-Boston-Cologne 2002, p. 125.

15. F. Kafka, *Briefe 1902–1924*, edited by M. Brod, *Gesammelte Werke*, Fisher Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1966, p. 223.
16. D. Shumsky, *Zweisprachgkeit und binationale Idee*, cit., p. 302.
17. See *ibid*., p. 314. On the binational ideal and the complex underlying question, which involved affirming the value of the diaspora outside Eretz Yisrael and acknowledging that exile continued even inside Eretz Yisrael, see the interesting observations made by the Israeli academic A. Raz-Krakotzkin, *Exil et souveranité. Judaïsme, sionisme et pensée binationale*, Preface by C. Ginzburg, La Fabrique éditions, Paris 2007.
18. See H.J Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry*, cit., p. 100.
19. See on this subject D. Shumsky, *Zweisprachigkeit und binationale Idee*, cit., p. 56–57.
20. See H. Tramer, *Die Dreivölkerstadt Prag*, cit., p. 159, and H. J. Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry*, cit., p. 100.
21. *Ibid*., p. 224.
22. S. H. Bergman, *Tagebücher und Briefe*, Vol. 1: 1901–1948, edited by M. Samburski, introduction by N. Rotenstreich, Jüdischer Verlag bei Athenäum, Königstein 1985, p. 9 (hereafter *TB* Vol. 1, followed by the page number). Bergmann is the name under which his books were published in Israel.
23. *Ibidem*.
24. Unlike Kafka, Bergmann came from a family of modest social standing and was able to study because he was such a good student and was exempted from paying school fees.
25. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 9.
26. G. Massino, *Protocolli della legge. Kafka all'XI Congresso sionista, in Verso una terra "antica e nuova," Culture del sionismo* (1895–1948), edited by G. Schiavoni and G. Massino, Carocci, Rome 2011, p. 143. I would like to thank Guido Massino, whose help and advice in finding bibliographical material, together with his skill in this area, were invaluable when writing this contribution.
27. See *TB* Vol. 1, p. 6.
28. S. Spector, *Another Zionism*, cit., p. 92.
29. Martin Buber (1878–1965). Buber was a key figure of the Zionist movement, a thinker, philosopher, and teacher of a whole generation of young Jews with a German background. Awareness of the spiritual, ethical, and aesthetic values of the Jewish renaissance was central to his cultural Zionism. Buber was born in Vienna and in 1938 he moved to Palestine, where he was considered an authoritative figure but one belonging to another world. He died in Jerusalem in 1965.
30. See H. Tramer, *Die Dreivölkerstadt Prag*, cit., pp. 159–160.
31. S. H. Bergman, *Tagebücher und Briefe*, Vol. 2: 1948–1975, edited by M. Samburski, introduction by N. Rotenstreich, Jüdischer Verlag bei Athenäum, Königstein 1985, p. 565 (hereafter *TB* Vol. 2, followed by the page number).
32. On Achad Ha'am, creator of spiritual Zionism (literally, one of the people, pseudonym of Asher Ginzberg, Russia 1856 Tel Aviv 1927) see the short and accurate summary by W. Laqueur, *Der Weg zum Staat Israel. Geschichte des Zionismus*, Europaverlag, Vienna 1975, p. 181–190, and G. Bensoussan, *Il sionismo*, cit., p. 1303, *passim*.
33. Micha Yosef Berdichevsky, pseudonym of Mikhah Yosef Bin Gorion, born in Ukraine in 1865 and died in Berlin in 1921, a writer and journalist in Hebrew and Yiddish who was widely acclaimed in Germany.
34. H. Bergmann, *Jawne und Jerusalem* (1914), in Id., *Jawne und Jerusalem*, cit., p. 40.
35. *Ibid*., p. 42.
36. *Ibidem*
37. *Ibid*., p. 35.
38. H. Bergmann, *Größerer Zionismus* (1911), in Id., *Jawne und Jerusalem*, cit., pp. 7–8.
39. See H.J. Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry*, cit., p. 103.
40. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 10.
41. See H. Tramer, *Die Dreivölkerstadt Prag*, cit., p. 160. After Bergmann's account of life amongst the Galician Jews, Bar Kochba significantly decided to set up a fund for "travel to Galicia and Eretz Yisrael," see *TB* Vol. 1, p. 10.
42. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 10.

43. *Ibid*., p. 12.
44. *Ibidem*.
45. On this matter, see C. Sonino, *Esilio, diaspora, terra promessa. Ebrei tedeschi verso est*, Bruno Mondadori, Milan 1998.
46. See D. Shumsky, *Zweisprachigkeit und binatonale Idee*, cit., pp. 132–133.
47. *Ibid*., pp. 220–221.
48. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 50.
49. See *Ibidem*.
50. *Ibid*., p. 51.
51. From a conversation with Massino.
52. See S. Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism*, cit., p. 30.
53. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 280.
54. H. Bergmann, *Die zionistischen Vereine*, in "Hamburger Jüdische Nachrichten," issue 10, 1918, p. 14–15.
55. H. Bergmann, *Über die Bedeutung des Hebräischen für die jüdischen Studenten*, in "Unsere Hoffnung" (Vienna), vol. 1, issue 3, pp. 85–88.
56. H. Bergmann, *Der jüdische Nationalismus nach dem Kriege* (1915), in Id., *Jawne und Jerusalem*, cit., p. 21.
57. See on this subject S. Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism*, cit., p. 34.
58. M. Buber, *Rinascimento ebraico* (1901), in Id., *Rinascimento ebraico. Scritti sull'ebraismo e il sionismo* (1899–1923). Publishing project, introductory essay and translations by A. Lavagetto, Mondadori, Milan 2013, p. 35.
59. He was referring to *Vom Geist des Judentums*.
60. The conference took place at the end of March 1920.
61. M. Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, Vol. II: 1918–1938, edited by and introduction written by G. Schaeder, in conjunction with E. Simon, and with the cooperation of R. Buber, M. Cohn, G. Stern, Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg 1973, p. 301.
62. *Ibid*., p. 302.
63. M. Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, Vol. I: 1897–1918, cit., pp. 388–389.
64. H. Bergmann, *Worte Mosis*, Minden, Westphalia 1913, p. 33.
65. Attention was called to this in S. Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism*, cit., p. xiv.
66. M. Voigts, "*Wir sollen alle kleine Fichte werden!*" *Johann Gottlieb Fichte als Prophet der Kultur-Zionisten*, Philo Verlag, Berlin-Vienna 2003, p. 119.
67. *Ibid*., p. 15.
68. *Ibid*., spec. pp. 120–121.
69. *Ibid*., p. 122.
70. *Ibid*., p. 154.
71. *Ibidem*.
72. *Ibid*., p. 155.
73. *Ibidem*.
74. See S. Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism*, cit., p. 8.
75. H. Bergmann, *Die nationale Bedeutung Achad Haams*, in "Der Jude," vol. 1 (1916), issue 6, p. 361.
76. H. Bergmann, *Verlag Stybel*, in "Der Jude," vol. 3 (1918), issue 10, p. 490. In 1931 Bergmann published an anthology on Landauer together with Hans Kohn in Palestine. On this subject, see Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism*, cit., p. 406.
77. H. Bergmann, *Jawne und Jerusalem* (1914), in Id., *Jawne und Jerusalem*, cit., p. 42.
78. See H.D. Zimmermann, *Hugo Bergmann. Zionismus und Theosophie*, in Id., *Kafka für Fortgeschrittene*, Beck, Munich 2004, pp. 46–53.
79. H. Bergmann, *Bemerkung zur arabischen Frage* (1911), in Id., *Jawne und Jerusalem*, cit., p. 55.
80. See *TB* Vol. 1, p. 29.
81. *Ibid*., p. 35.
82. H. Bergmann, *Bemerkung zur arabischen Frage* (1911), cit., p. 60.
83. *Ibid*., p. 61.
84. I am indebted to Haim Baharier, master and scholar of the Torah, for this expression.

85. See M. Brenner, *Breve storia del sionismo*, Italian translation by M. Tosti-Croce, Laterza, Rome Bari 2003,
86. H. Bergmann*, Die wahre Autonomie* (1918), in Id., *Jawne und Jerusalem*, cit., p. 68.
87. *Ibid*., pp. 70–71.
88. *Ibid*., p. 73.
89. *Ibid*., p. 72.
90. *Ibid*., p. 73.
91. *Ibidem*.
92. H. Bergmann, *Die Heiligung des Namens* (1913), in Id., *Jawne und Jerusalem*, cit., p. 87.
93. *Ibid*., p. 89.
94. *Ibid*., p. 95.
95. *Ibid*., p. 96.
96. *Ibidem*.
97. See on this subject M. Brenner, *Breve storia del sionismo*, cit., pp. 104–105.
98. See D. Shumsky, *Zweisprachigkeit und binationale Idee*, cit., p. 285.
99. *TB* Vol. 1, p.112
100. *Ibid*., p. 115.
101. *Ibidem*
102. *Ibid*., p. 128.
103. *Ibidem*
104. On Robert Weltsch see W. Laqueur, *Der Weg zum Staat Israel. Geschichte des Zionismus,* Europaverlag, Vienna 1975, p. 497.
105. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 137.
106. *Ibid*., p. 138.
107. On Hapoel Hatzair (The young worker), see M. Brenner, *Breve storia del sionismo*, cit., p. 87: "Even though his followers adapted socialist categories, these were subordinate to Jewish nationalism."
108. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 141.
109. *Ibid*., p. 142.
110. *Ibidem*.
111. *Ibid*., p. 151.
112. *Ibid*., p. 154.
113. *Ibidem*.
114. *Ibid*., p. 155.
115. Haim Nachman Bialik (Rady 1873, Vienna 1934). Jewish poet, born in the Ukraine, then part of the Russian Empire, who wrote his works in Hebrew and also Yiddish. He moved to Tel Aviv in Palestine in 1924. Bialik is considered one of the classic authors of Jewish literature and is commonly acknowledged to be Israel's national poet.
116. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 155.
117. See G. Bensoussan, *Il sionismo*, cit., p. 740.
118. Yishuv, Jewish population of Palestine.
119. See G. Bensoussan, *Il sionismo*, cit., p. 739.
120. See H. Bergmann, *Die hebräische Sprache in Palästina*, in "Der Jude," vol. 9 (1925), issue 2, pp. 133–135.
121. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 155. Bergmann dreamed of a library that would be innovative, even in its layout: the books were to be easily accessible, visible, and the shelves open. I am grateful to Enrico Lucca for this information.
122. *Ibid*., p. 156.
123. *Ibidem*.
124. See on this subject W. Laqueur, *Der Weg zum Staat Israel. Geschichte des Zionismus*, cit., particularly p. 227.
125. See M. Buber, *Rinascimento ebraico*, cit., particularly p. 344–435, and his persuasive comments about Lavagetto, pp. xlix–lv.
126. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 160.
127. *Ibidem*.

128. *Ibidem*.
129. H. Bergmann, *Nicht Politik-Kolonisation. Einige Bermerkungen zur arabischen Frage*, in "Freie Zionistische Blatter," July 1921, p. 58.
130. *Ibidem*.
131. *Ibid*., p. 59.
132. *Ibidem*.
133. *Ibid*., p. 59–60.
134. *Ibid*., p. 60.
135. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 162.
136. This refers to the third aliyah (1918–1923), to the emigration of the collectivist settlement pioneers, the settlers of the land of Israel.
137. *TB* Vol. 1, pp. 165–166.
138. *Ibid*., p. 173.
139. H. Bergmann, *Drei Jahre Schaffens der palestinensischen Arbeiterschaft*, in "Jüdischer National-Kalender für die Tschechoslovakei," 1920, pp. 44–65, *passim*.
140. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 676.
141. The White Papers published by the British authorities during the period of the Palestinian Mandate contained a set of laws and measures that established the Mandate's policy on the situation in Palestine. The White Paper referred to is that of 1922, see on this subject M. Brenner, *Breve storia del sionismo*, cit., pp. 115–116.
142. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 174.
143. See S. Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism*, cit., pp. 105–106. This has been referred to most recently by D. Shumsky, *Zweisprachgkeit und binationale Idee*, cit.
144. See M. Buber, *Lo spirito dell'Oriente e l'Ebraismo*, in Id. *Sette discorsi sull'ebraismo*, Carucci, Rome 1986, p. 67–86.
145. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 192.
146. *Ibid*., p. 188.
147. On the subject of Brit Shalom, see the crucial contribution of S. Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism*, cit. Brit Shalom ceased to exist in the early 1930s, but the baton was taken up in 1942 by the Ichud, in which Buber himself, who arrived in Palestine in 1938, was to play a prominent role.
148. The central European cultural templates for Brit Shalom have been fittingly highlighted by S.E. Aschheim, *Beyond the Border, The German Jewish Legacy Abroad*, Princeton University Press, 2007, particularly p. 13.
149. See G. Bensoussan, *Il sionismo*, cit., p. 684.
150. See M. Buber, *Una terra e due popoli. Sulla questione ebraico-araba*, writings chosen and introduced by P. Mendes-Flohr, Italian edition by I. Kajon and P. Piccolella, Giuntina, Florence 2008.
151. See G. Bensoussan, *Il sionismo*, cit., p. 687. Raz-Krakotzkin has written about the implications and limits of this binational approach in recent years. This academic, who teaches the history of Judaism at the Ben Gurion University in Israel believes that the mechanism at work in this binational approach was not so much a true openness and desire for dialogue and cooperation with the Arabs, but rather an attitude dictated by need and opportunity because at that time the Jews in Palestine were a minority presence compared to the Arabs. Arabs who were nevertheless seen in a context that, as the author emphasized and severely condemned, had always been that of colonization, the colonization of a land that the Zionists treated as a place of legend. See A. Raz-Krakotzkin, *Exil et souveranité*, cit., particularly p. 103–130.
152. *TB* Vol. 2, p. 698.
153. See S. Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism*, cit., p. 264.
154. *TB* Vol. 1 p. 207.
155. On the complex and controversial figure of Jabotinsky, born in Ukraine in 1880 and died in America in 1940, a cosmopolitan and nationalist writer, translator, and intellectual, see G. Bensoussan, *Il sionismo*, cit., p. 1241–1251, and M. Stanislawski, *Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 2001, particularly p. 116–237.

156. *Luftmensch* was the definition given in exile, in the Galut, of a Jew hanging in space, living on air without a profession or a job.
157. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 205.
158. *Ibid*., p. 177.
159. *Ibidem*.
160. *Ibidem*.
161. *Ibidem*.
162. See *ibid*., p. 210.
163. Betar, chauvinist youth group linked to the revisionists of Jabotinsky.
164. *TB* Vol.1, p. 260.
165. See *TB* Vol. 2, p. 644.
166. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 221.
167. The weekly review of Hachdut Hawoda, Labor Unity, the Zionist workers' party.
168. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 245.
169. *Ibid*., p. 215.
170. *Ibidem*.
171. *Ibid*., p. 228.
172. See G. Bensoussan, *Lo Stato d'Israele, il sionismo e lo sterminio degli Ebrei d'Europa*, Italian translation by L. Verrani, utet, Turin 2009, particularly Chapter I, *Lo Stato prima dello Stato*, p. 3–15.
173. On the distinctive nature of German Zionism, see the historical account by R. Weltsch, *Deutscher Zionismus in der Rückschau, in In Zwei Welten, Siegfried Moses zum fünfundsiebzigsten Geburtstag*, Verlag Bitaon Ltd, Tel Aviv, 1962, p. 27–42, and more recently H. Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe*. *The Distinctive Path of German Zionism*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Leo Baeck Institute, Jerusalem 1998.
174. See S. Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism*, cit., p. 310.
175. See *ibid*., p. 312.
176. H. Bergmann, *Zur Frage der Verfassung Palästinas*, typewritten (5 pages), Bergmann Archive, Jewish National and University Library (jnul), Arch* 1502, Series 10, Articles by Hugo Bergmann, p. 5.
177. Bergmann and Scholem lived in two adjacent houses in Rehavia. A relationship grew up between Bergmann and Escha Scholem that led the pair to leave their respective spouses and marry in 1937. Two daughters were born of their marriage, Chana and Nechama. Scholem went on to marry Anja Freud.
178. See S. Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism*, cit., p. 409.
179. See *TB* Vol. 1, p. 250.
180. See G. Bensoussan, *Lo Stato d'Israele*, cit., p. 3–15.
181. M. Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, Vol. II: 1918–1938, cit., p. 302.
182. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 251.
183. On the 1929 riot, see W. Laqueur*, Der Weg zum Staat Israel*, cit., p. 272–278; B. Morris, *Vittime*, Italian translation by S. Galli, Milan, Rizzoli 2001, p. 145–157, and M. Brenner, *Breve storia del sionismo*, cit., p. 117–118. For an account of the period, see "Jüdische Rundschau," issue 68, 30 August 1929.
184. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 275.
185. *Ibid*., p. 288.
186. I. Pappe *Storia della Palestina moderna. Una terra, due popoli*, Italian translation by P. Arlorio, Einaudi, Turin 2004, p. 134.
187. On this subject see W. Laqueur, *Der Weg zum Staat Israel*, cit., p. 513, and B. Morris, *Vittime*, cit., p. 153.
188. *TB* Vol. 1, p. 344.
189. *TB* Vol. 2, p. 538.
190. *Ibidem*.

"We Can Never Be Fully at Home"

Gershom Scholem in Eretz Yisrael

> "Theoretically I am always inclined to favour proposals such as those made by Herr Scholem, which demand the utmost, and in so doing achieve nothing. So one simply must not appraise such proposals and their value based on the actual result laid before one."[1]

Gershom Scholem, the quintessential scholar of Jewish mysticism and the Kabbalah, wrote from Jerusalem "We can never be fully at home" in a poem dedicated to Ingeborg Bachmann in 1967.[2] "There's something preliminary, something provisional about Jewish history; hence its inability to give of itself entirely,"[3] the scholar observed in 1959. This unfinished air therefore seems to be the mark of Jewish history, not merely in the Galut, in the exile from Zion, but also in Eretz Yisrael: everywhere the Jewish people are perennially on the move.[4] Driven by a Zionist utopian spirit, Scholem left Berlin, where he was born to an assimilated bourgeois family in 1897, to make his "return" to Jerusalem in 1923. Through writings that were largely private, not intended for publication, and in many respects deliberately incomprehensible,[5] marked as they are by allusions, reticence, and ambiguity,[6] Scholem voiced his "despair" (a metaphysical despair) about the Zionist project, particularly in the early years of his immigration to Palestine and until the early 1930s. This despair was certainly worked through and downscaled during subsequent years, even after the tragic events surrounding the Holocaust, when Scholem toned down his criticism of the situation, but it remained in the background, as evidenced by the poem referred to above, which was written in 1967. This metaphysical despair did not involve, as it did for others, flowing back into the diaspora. Instead it meant remaining in the land

where, despite everything, the Jewish people had returned to their past. Until the scholar's death in 1982, he saw this land as continuing to pose an open challenge to the mystery of existence and Jewish destiny, susceptible to unpredictable outcomes that only the historical movement set in motion by the return to Zion had made possible. Even though "We can never be fully at home," and everything is still unfulfilled, another viewpoint is: everything is still open.

For the young Scholem, if you were Jewish, it was absolutely imperative to become Zionist: he was the quintessential example of Kurt Blumenfeld's observation that the Zionist movement was a way of being typical of post-assimilationist Jewishness.[7] The background to this new way of being was the historical and cultural context of Germany between the end of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century. At this time, in the wake of rising nationalism and renewed anti-Semitism but also of the crisis of values, new Romanticism and the new cultural *fin de siècle* sensibility, a small but significant élite of German Jewish intelligentsia believed that the crisis of emancipation and assimilation suggested the Zionist option as not just one way but *the* "road to freedom," to quote the title of the famous novel by Arthur Schnitzler. For the post-assimilationist generation to which Scholem belonged, the bourgeois and liberal Judaism of his fathers, so formal and petrified, wan and fleeting, was a Jewishness that did not have any intrinsic dynamic and vital force in a spiritual and historical sense. And this force was missing even from traditional Judaism—or at least this was how the new generation saw it. For those young Jews, orphans of Judaism, this awareness involved a need to revive Judaism, which meant redefining a tradition from a cultural, ethical, and aesthetic perspective that could represent an alternative way of life, a not merely historical alternative to the Jewish existence in the diaspora.

For Gerhard Scholem—his choice of the name Gershom, which meant "a stranger there," came after his meeting with Zionism[8]—the pains of a generation would lead to the definition of a highly personal anti-bourgeois Zionism that was, at least initially, anarchic, mystical, and religious, radically alternative to the world of *Deutschjudentum* or German Jewishness as well as to the universe of rabbinical tradition.[9] Unlike the first generation of the Zionists, Scholem, who belonged to the second generation, would also make his choice not so much in response to anti-Semitism but because Zionism, apart from being an ethical choice—as he would recall in his memoirs[10]—was to his eyes the only possibility of real and distinct disassimilation from the deceptive light of *Deutschjudentum*, the German Jewish world that he saw embodied in the values and lifestyle of his family and, closer at hand, his father Arthur Scholem. For the son, this meant returning Judaism to a historical, complex, underground, and vital movement that was in a sense considered by "enlightened" and assimilated Judaism (which the young Scholem

ultimately now also saw as the self-referential and ahistoric Halachic Judaism of tradition) to be over or at best on the way out. This pressing drive toward disassimilation and Zionism, which was to become a way of living and thinking for Scholem, meant that he would always go through life drawing distinctions, forever drawing boundaries,[11] a trait that can certainly be partly traced back to his anarchic tension. "Opposition: a vital element,"[12] he confided in the diaries he wrote as a young man. As we shall see, Scholem would define himself first in Germany and later in Palestine by differentiating himself by opposition, not least because of his often paradoxical relationship (which was in any case complex and contradictory) with the Jewish world and Zionism. This need for opposition is probably what was referred to by the philosopher Franz Rosenzweig, with whom Scholem had a stormy altercation in 1922 shortly before emigrating, when he said that Scholem saw Jewishness *merely* as a cloister in which he could practice his own spiritual exercises: "He may have been the only one who truly went home. But he went home *alone*."[13]

Reconstructing the choice he made in his youth could be the subject of a completely different study: as the writer Cynthia Ozick noted in this regard, Thomas Mann could have written a kind of *Bildungsroman*[14] about this, a Jewish *Wilhelm Meister* perhaps, or rather a new *Zauberberg*. Suffice it to say that Scholem's idiosyncratic and paradoxical Zionism took shape and ran parallel to his highly personal assimilation of German Romanticism and its philosophy, his exploration of the Kabbalah as expounded by the romantic philosopher Franz Joseph Molitor—who revealed to him the "metaphysics of Judaism"[15]—and of authors such as Jean Paul, Goethe, Novalis, Hölderlin, Mörike, of the poet George, and the philosophy of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche: in the latter case Scholem was to be struck by the following statement in Zarathustra: "Only from the grave can there be resurrection,"[16] a statement that seemed to be aimed directly at those young German Jews. His personal reworking of the great German culture was interwoven with an equally original and intense, all-consuming passion for knowledge about Judaism and studying the sources of Jewish tradition. He believed that learning the Hebrew language was an unavoidable means to achieve this end, to the extent that his relationship with the holy language would prove to be an overriding concern, yet not without contradictions. While he devoted himself to a passionate and rigorous study of the Bible and the Talmud, he perceived the existence of a hidden life in Judaism and understood the extent of the greatness of the Jewish tradition that had been deliberately forgotten: when he was very young he became interested in Jewish mystic tradition, the world of the Kabbalah—partly introduced to him by reading Molitor[17]—a tradition buried and neglected by the rationalist Judaism of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*,[18] and also by the historian Heinrich Graetz, even though it was he who introduced Scholem to the history of the Jews.[19] He thus began, when very

young, to lay the foundations of a quest that would subsequently turn him into the quintessential scholar of Jewish mysticism and the Kabbalah, the undisputed discoverer and interpreter of the underground and secret sources of Jewish tradition. Martin Buber was again responsible, through his Hasidic legends and *Discourses in Judaism*, for initially opening Scholem's eyes to the need for a spiritual rebirth of Judaism, for a moral, cultural, and aesthetic revival against the backdrop of Zion: "We do not want to be the generation that perishes in the desert, we want to behold the land of our fathers from the mountains of longing . . . we are the future. We are different. . . . We have chosen without making compromises,"[20] wrote the young Scholem. When Buber became an enthusiastic advocate for World War I, Scholem felt a need to distance himself from the Master, although he would always acknowledge the debt that bound him to Buber. Scholem preferred the moral rigor of Achad Ha'am, the theorist of cultural Zionism, who was to offer him lasting inspiration, as we will see. Reading *Revolution* by the socialist anarchist Gustav Landauer also opened up new horizons: "Revolution everywhere!" he wrote, "we don't want reform or re-education, we want revolution. . . . There are external and internal revolutions."[21] Landauer also made him see the need, even for the Jewish people, for a community and not a State:

> We Jews are not a people of the state . . . go to Palestine to found a State, . . . thereby forging new chains out of the old. We want to go to Palestine out of a thirst for freedom and longing for the future. The future belongs to the Orient. . . . The path of Zionism follows the path of the revolution, which is the road above the base through the unstudied, the unexplained.[22]

We will find these themes worked through and explored in some beliefs that he expressed, sometimes publicly, in Palestine. "Everything I say refers back to Zion,"[23] he observed, "*Zion is my yardstick for all things*,"[24] seeing Zion more as a spiritual space than a geographical location. He thus claimed a unilaterality that he believed necessary for becoming a Jew, only and absolutely Jewish, an accomplished and complete Jew, who would fulfill the perfection already intrinsic in his name.[25] Overwhelmed by the Nietzschean pathos of *Zarathustra*, his wish when very young was to write his own *Judenzarathustra*, a Jewish Zarathustra, believing, if only for a fleeting moment, that he was the Chosen One, the Messiah.[26] This was certainly in line with the vitalist philosophy that pervaded the culture of his time, but above all it was consistent with his Zionist vision of the revival of Judaism.[27] Even though Scholem had a youthful dalliance with the Zionist youth movement, he soon distanced himself from this as well because he judged that there was a tendency toward the assimilation of manners and sayings that had little to do with Jewishness and a lot to do with German youth. He believed that it spawned empty words, rather than a rigorous and absolute commitment to go

back to the sources of tradition, regain possession of the Hebrew language, and focus on Zion, leaving behind the confused jumble that was *Deutschjudentum*. Scholem believed that the young people in the Zionist movement were Jews and Germans, in other words always thinking about Zion and about something else. We can well understand how Scholem was opposed to their very German and partly Jewish activism because of his conviction that a Jewish community requires solitude since it is founded, as Gert Mattenklott observed, "on the metaphysical loss of Judaism in expectation of the Messiah."[28] This metaphysical loss led Scholem to write that "anyone can be reasonable, the Messiah is something special and is therefore absurd."[29] It was specifically from 1915, when he began his intellectual debate and friendship with Walter Benjamin—who persuaded him into a radical re-questioning of nineteenth-century rationalism[30]—that he began increasingly to see that the Zionism he was formulating and specifying was no longer the outcome of an evolutionary and progressive pathway, or of a political or ideological project. Instead he began to see it as a choice that had nothing to do with reason and everything to do with a complex theological and metaphysical constellation that drew on symbols of Jewish mysticism. He was to increasingly entrust this constellation to deliberately hermetic writings, absolute metaphors that were unrelated to concepts but rather the outcome of an intellectual short-circuit, a metaphysical gamble, as his youthful pathos gave way to a stern ascetic outlook.[31] In some passages of his youthful diaries before he moved to Jerusalem, in 1923, and in writings of an esoteric nature that were not intended for publication, he kept silent about Zionism in order to talk about it, conceiving it, as Marina Cavarocchi emphasized, as "an expression of the attempt to restore the Jewish vocation to a union of 'action and knowledge' that . . . have their centre in the Torah."[32] And he placed his faith in a utopian leap: "Everything else will be found creatively in Eretz Yisrael," he affirmed. "There what can only be achieved through beauty will be recreated, there new symbols will arise as soon as he who seeks Zion with fervent mysticism throws himself into the fray, there the Torah will be alive as it almost never has been. Because we ourselves," he concluded, "will become religious: Zionists."[33] "The meaning of life is to call for the Messiah and build Zion":[34] "Very soon the Messiah will redeem," he wrote in a poem, "and he will build the new Jerusalem."[35] For the young Scholem, Zionism meant molding his entire life around an ethical phenomenon and the *Tikkun*[36] was the radical transformation of the Jewish identity he was waiting for, *Tikkun* which is also a precondition preparatory to redemption. "We must aspire," he wrote, "to a *Tikkun* of the soul."[37] He was ready to take up the challenge of Zionism: "Be a holy people"[38]—his notes indeed include the quote 'and you will be for me a holy nation and a kingdom of priests.'[39] This is our program, and it is Zionism in the style of Achad Ha'am,"[40] in other words a highly elitist form of Zionism that sees Eretz Yisrael as a place

where a Jewish spiritual center can be built that can radiate toward the diaspora, a center of national and cultural rebirth that can serve as a model for worldwide Judaism.

Scholem therefore dreamed of founding a *Bund der Eiferer*, a sect of young enthusiasts who wished to go to Eretz Yisrael and there "lay the foundations of a new life, a new *Bund* like the great circle of mystics who surrounded Ari a Safed in the 16th century, which triggered a radical change in forms of life throughout the Jewish population."[41] A closed group, a sect, or a vanguard, able to prepare a *Tikkun* that, he stated, "could have incalculable consequences for all people."[42] The world of the *Tikkun*, he wrote, is indeed "the messianic kingdom."[43] The *Tikkun*, the eccentric doctrine of the Kabbalah, Jewish mysticism and the messianic reference—we need think only of the comparison between the desired *Bund der Eiferer* and that of the mystics, the Kabbalists who worked in Safed, preparing Sabbatai Sevi's coming messainic movement—therefore had no little influence on his *Lehre* of Zion, the teaching that came from Zion and became less and less communicable in an esoteric language because "it was not repeatable in ideas."[44] And he asserted, as he would also go on to repeat, that Zionism, particularly at its deepest layers "*is not* a messianic movement."[45] The messianic claim is in any case a utopian outlook that is implicit in the return of the Jews to Eretz Yisrael as well as in the very assertions mentioned above in the sense that he expected from the return to Zion a radical transformation of the Jewish existence in exile, the *Tikkun*, or preparation for the messianic kingdom. While the links at work in Scholem between Zionism and messianism are still an open question,[46] we can be certain that Scholem did not expect a political solution of the Jewish question from the return to Zion, let alone the construction of a State. Instead he expected a radical transformation of the Jewish identity through inexplicable and inaccessible spiritual paths taken by a small but significant élite or sect: "Twenty are more important than a thousand."[47] He did not intend this return as a break with tradition and his Jewish past, but as a utopian return to Jewish history in its entirety. He expected from this return a radical religious, ethical, and cultural renewal that would this time stem from inside Judaism itself.

Even when he was still in Germany, Scholem understood the difficulties and also took into account the failure of the return: "A novel should be written about a young man who went to Eretz Yisrael, and fell apart in that country,"[48] he noted in his diaries when he was still very young, and later: "In order for me to live in Zion, perhaps I will have to become unhappy in Palestine. I see the most sad and depressing possibilities in the future."[49]

In a letter Scholem sent in 1921 to Robert Weltsch and Hans Kohn, he significantly distanced himself from Buber's two faithful Prague students, who were now prominent exponents of German Zionism. This in some sense foreshadowed the challenge and the nature of the contest that would await

him in the Land shortly thereafter: "You probably feel that the jumble of religion and politics is something wonderful. I consider it a disaster. I think that the only reasonable meaning of a Jewish policy, if there ever were to be one, would be that of making it possible to achieve our rebirth in an invisible sphere through systematic education and the emergence of a certain reflection."[50] Scholem was thus referring to a non-revolutionary Zionism that was no longer radical or anti-bourgeois, but based on a stratum where there were no more revolutions—a deep Jewish-Zionist metaphysical stratum that bore no direct relationship with social or political problems, as opposed to socialist Zionism, which confused religion and politics. Scholem believed that the secret teaching that stemmed from Zion was a condition of history, which is "the theatre of Jewish renewal in concrete terms"[51] provided it did not manifest itself directly in that history. Scholem did not deny the legitimacy of the messianic tendencies within Zionism but did deny the possibility of their direct intervention in history, while warning against the ever-present temptation of bending to history that which by definition transcends it. For Scholem, metaphysical history and real history "follow parallel courses . . . , which fall within the symbolic sphere."[52] The boundaries between utopian theocracy and politics had, admittedly, to be redrawn on each individual occasion,[53] but Scholem's Zionist utopia with its mystical and religious bent could not rule out—at best it implied—a correlation between the theological and political spheres because it awaited a prospective upheaval in history:[54] these are the aporias of messianism[55] spoken of by Stephan Moses. When he arrived in Eretz Yisrael and found a situation that was bound to be different from the ideal that had spurred him on, the confusion of those boundaries seemed to him fraught with such grave misunderstandings, disasters, and catastrophes that he was driven to the brink of nothingness, or the abyss, particularly during the early years of his emigration, when the mystical and religious drive—the essential core supporting his return to Zion—seemed to him so overlooked that they had succumbed, not least as a result of the deceptively messianic blandishments of Zionist politics.

In September 1923 Scholem left the apparent and reflected light, the light of self-deceit, the misleading light of an assimilated life, to meet the splendor of Zion. And while Zion did not necessarily mean Palestine, the latter was nevertheless ultimately the land of holiness that he was about to tread.

"Dear friend," he wrote to Ernst Simon on 29 October 1923, "I have now been in the Land for six weeks."[56] He reported his arrival in Eretz Yisrael with these few simple words. One year after his arrival, he wrote the following to Fritz Hommel, the Orientalist scholar with whom he obtained his doctorate in 1922 in Munich: "I believe that for me too it is better to build my life on a soil and in a context that has before it, despite all its harshness and difficulties, a safe and constant development of all aspects of life,"[57] by contrast to what his prospects would have been in Germany. But these were

not the reasons for his return. From a practical standpoint, shortly after his arrival in the difficult situation of Palestine under the Mandate, he was admittedly able, with the aid of his friend Hugo Bergmann, to take up a position as a librarian at the Jewish National Library, which enabled him not only to live but also to continue his work of study and research. Yet Scholem's expectations, even though he claimed not to have any great illusions, were of a completely different order, as evidenced by one of his unpublished writings at the end of 1924: "The time has come when hearts have to decide whether they want to give up Zionism in the sense of preparing for the Eternal, in favour of Jewish State Zionism, which is catastrophe."[58] A pronouncement of a theocratic nature seems to have failed and he wished to plug the faultline of theocracy with a "statehood that was invented the day before yesterday,"[59] in other words without any link with tradition. An inrush of the divine or the "preparation for the Eternal," implicitly linked to the return to Zion, appeared to have failed, the theocracy was not up to dealing with the time and the politics, "the statehood of Zion" seemed to want to take its place. It is hard to reconstruct the type of theocratic intervention Scholem was referring to. The only clue may lie in a note taken from the diaries of Hugo Bergmann, in which the philosopher reported something that Scholem revealed to him in conversation in 1928: "At that time, through a revolutionary act . . . , Kook could have saved the Jewish religion. That moment has gone, Kook did not find the courage."[60] Rabbi Kook (1865–1937), Chief Rabbi in Eretz Israel between 1921 and 1935, and "perhaps the greatest Jewish mystic of his generation"[61] was a charismatic figure in Palestine under the British Mandate. We do not exactly know what was the role of Rabbi Kook in the events to which Scholem referred with regard to the failure of theocracy or the revolutionary act that could have saved the Jewish religion: perhaps the reference to a lack of courage suggests obstacles of a religious nature met by Rabbi Kook, an admired but "isolated thinker,"[62] with the other priests of Zion, obstacles that were not addressed or overcome. Rabbi Kook's complicated opinions on the relationship between theology and politics, between Messianism and Zionism, between what is sacred and what is profane, between what is complete and what is partial, have been ably explored by Ravitzky. Unlike the other Rabbis, "Rabbi Kook," explained Ravitzky, "did not see the national reawakening as representing any departure or contradiction" with regard to the religious promises, "indeed, in his eyes, it appeared to have paved the way to their ultimate and full realisation." Rabbi Kook also stated that "the future state of Israel will be founded on holiness. . . . The expected state . . . is measured with clearly messianic and metaphysical yardsticks.[63] Rabbi Kook therefore saw Zionism as having "great relevance due to its messianic function."[64]

Against the backdrop of a complicated theological and political confrontation, which left little room for the utopian project that had encouraged his

return to Zion, Scholem surrendered to pessimism and despair: "Good God, this was not what we wanted. We believed intimately in the fullness of the heart. . . . We came here and thought we would throw ourselves into the fullness of the sea, not in its externality, but in the intensity of budding life, instead of merely wallowing in the slime of the babble that echoes to us from the mass meetings."[65] Scholem was very probably also referring to the mass meetings organized by the revisionist movement of Vladimir Jabotinsky,[66] which was becoming established in the Land. Even though he was no longer part of the Zionist Executive after 1923, in 1925 Jabotinsky had founded the revisionist movement and the Betar youth movement, also increasingly distancing himself from the moderate approach of Chaim Weizmann,[67] president of the World Zionist Organization. Jabotinsky advocated the establishment of Jewish legions, he proposed an openly nationalist Zionism that, as mentioned earlier, fought for the natural borders of Israel on both banks of the Jordan and for numerical supremacy of the Jews over the resident Arab population in the Land. With reference to Herzl, he also believed that the main goal of Zionism was to build a Jewish State. Prophesying an imminent catastrophe for European Jews, Jabotinsky also called for mass emigration to Palestine, thus conjuring up messianic scenarios for political purposes.[68] While the Socialist Zionists in Palestine, led by David Ben Gurion,[69] rejected the brutal, unscrupulous politics of power of the revisionists, their opposition was dictated mostly by tactical reasons. "Thus we have to accept failure, hoping it will soon come. In a metaphysical sense, we have lost the battle in the Land that Zionism has won in the world."[70] Zionism missed the opportunity for Judaism to be reborn in the invisible, metaphysical sphere, and its secret, messianic interpretation was frozen in the cold light of the public arena of politics, in which messianism had been reduced to mere words, as in Jabotinsky's mass meetings. These were concepts that Scholem would emphasize during those years, as we shall see. Yet Jabotinsky was not the only open front: while in Germany Scholem had already expressed doubts over the direct relationship between Zionism and the social question, now in 1926 he went further, stating: "In our youth we did not of course believe that the farming villages of Palestine were Zionism, but we thought that they bore a direct relationship to it. This proved to be wrong."[71] The differentiation was therefore on several fronts: the revisionist front, that of empirical or political Zionism—as he defined the majority Zionism in the Yishuv that was preparing the Jewish state, although without admitting it—and ultimately also that of the pioneers, the kibbutzim who in Scholem's eyes set the fulfillment of social utopia before the "symbolic" sphere, as we are reminded by Bonola.[72] However radical, this differentiation and opposition did not prevent him from making a specific commitment to the Land, even at public level. In 1925, the year when the revisionist movement was set up, Scholem became one of the founders of the small but highly representative Brit Shalom or Pact of Peace

group, already discussed in the previous chapter: for Scholem, only a small, independent group such as Brit Shalom could act as a driving force for the spiritual center and take on the project of building a national culture. In 1926, Brit Shalom published its first political statement of intent. Together with the other five members of Brit Shalom who were signatories—Jehuda Magnes, Radler-Feldman, Rabbi Isaia Shapira, Hugo Bergmann, and Hans Kohn—Scholem played a decisive role in its drafting. In clear opposition to Jabotinsky and the establishment of his armed forces, this proclaimed, among other things: "We believe that weapons, lack of trust and fear do not avert war but are its cause."[73]

The boundaries that Scholem had drawn in Germany between religion and politics remained, but it was still necessary in this unknown, not merely historical climate, to redefine them and, despite all the differences and divergences, to establish a public alliance at least with Brit Shalom, while Scholem reserved his most secret resolutions and hidden expectations for writings that were not directly published. What was at stake was the fate of Zionism and thus of the Jewish people, whose rebirth was, as we know, intimately linked to the return to Zion. While Scholem appeared committed in public, he already despaired of a positive outcome to the whole affair in his private and confidential statements. In a letter to Werner Kraft in December 1924 Scholem wrote: "I am very much part of the faction siding with apocalyptic opinions about the fate of the Zionist movement here,"[74] words that preceded his repeated declarations about the failure of the Zionist project, which continued at least until the beginning of the 1930s. "You cannot imagine the worlds that are in juxtaposition here: life for thinkers here is an open invitation to go crazy, and in any case, in one way or another, a theological background is inevitably needed." . . . Everything can be said about the new Palestine . . . and one could describe the specific problems (and how could it be otherwise in this unimaginable clash of unleashed productivity from six continents and a higher world?), but I think we need to admit that it happens more here than in other corners of the world."[75] But it was, in a later letter to Ernst Simon, in September 1925, that his apocalyptic opinion about the fate of Zionism was accompanied by a sense of defeat:

> You know that I came here without great illusions about the present. Now, after two years, I can unfortunately assure you that I have hardly any illusions any more. On this ship, and there is certainly no other, we are in God's hands, in other words we cannot expect much more from history. No-one should fall under the illusion that what is happening and will happen here still has in its substance and essence anything to do with the Zionism to whose name one is enslaved, particularly after the open recantation of the aims of the human *Tikkun*. In the struggle between the building of Palestine, *at any cost*,[76] and Zionism, the latter is hopelessly defeated.[77]

Scholem, who had imagined that "the Divine would burst into History at the very moment when the secular dimension had taken definitive form,"[78] now had to acknowledge the failure of such expectations. He complained of the explicit retraction of the transformation plan, the human *Tikkun*, a *Tikkun* thrumming with hidden messianic accents: instead the *Tikkun* had been retracted in favor of building the country, while Scholem believed that "complex relationships that could not be exhausted by political activism flowed between the real unredeemed and redemption."[79] Furthermore, Scholem saw the migration of the fourth aliyah take place in the Land between 1924 and 1925. This was increasingly less selective, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, not driven by the utopian spirit of Zionism but by practical considerations and by the need to escape from prohibitive situations. A migratory flow that, in the opinion of Scholem, was improperly called Zionist and that he compared to a wave of sharks with no euphemism intended. The fourth aliyah was mostly made up of Polish Jews, largely from the lower middle class, who came to Palestine in great numbers between 1924 and 1925. They were driven above all by the need and desire to improve their material living conditions and not because they were Zionists, mostly identifying themselves, as we have said, with Jabotinsky's slogans.[80] The building of the country, but not the preparation for the Eternal, was pursued through this aliyah and its petit-bourgeois spirit. "Zionism capitulated long ago, and the only question that should engage Zionists is this: What is now the place of the Zionist?"[81] Scholem asked himself. The defeat is such that the Zionists cannot expect anything else from history—we are in the hands of God—which opens up the question of what prospects Zionism may still have. In an unpublished letter addressed to Ernst Simon in 1925, Scholem's tones were even gloomier:

> During the years I spent here, I will draft a work . . . entitled: *apres nous le déluge*. . . . The meeting with the Land here and now has entered into an insoluble conflict with empirical Zionism. I do not believe that the trend of life in Palestine will long be influenced by Zionism, except for a short and fleeting period. Even now the influence is extraordinarily minimal.[82]

In an unpublished text of 1926 with an apparently paradoxical title: "The despair of the winner," Scholem stated that the historical task of Zionism—which was not at all its primordial task—had been fulfilled before even arriving in the Land: "Zionism won out . . . in its most indeterminate yet most effective form, even before pitting itself against physical life in the Land and the language,"[83] he said here. Zionism won in the world, unscrupulously forming an alliance with Great Britain, from which it obtained the Balfour Declaration. Above all, it won in Germany, where it won hearts: this too was an early victory, as Scholem would write, echoing one of his Masters, Achad

Ha'am, who had already warned at the end of the previous century of the risks to the movement of an early victory.[84] Zionism had definitely won, but too soon, said Scholem, because it had won before it could be effective and influence events in Eretz Yisrael. Its historical function had therefore already been fulfilled, but in exile. "For our very existence, for the messianic struggle, we no longer have the strength,"[85] he wrote. For the messianic struggle, or for the achievement of the human *Tikkun*, which is the premise of redemption, for "preparation of the eternal," Zionism no longer had any strength left to fight this battle and thus the task allotted to it by history had ended. While its goal was to ensure the historical immortality of the nation, the immortality of the Jewish genius, Zionism had used up its strength to ensure the existence of one or two generations of Jews in the diaspora, and perhaps even in Eretz Yisrael. This was because "we have not merely dreamed of our own utopia, the good times when we dared to fantasise have drained us of all our strength: we won too soon, we became winners in the *visible* world of intelligence before we could do so in the invisible world of demons . . . Our entire Zionist world edifice has collapsed. The aim is not to save ourselves but to go politely in ruins: leap into the abyss, the abyss between victory and reality, Zionism and existence to close it."[86] His observations between the end of 1924 and 1926 already clearly revealed the failure of Zionism, whose ethical and cultural premises he continued to support by publicly committing himself as a member of Brit Shalom. However, Scholem returned to and re-explored some of his previous arguments in an unpublished interim reflection on the state of affairs drawn up toward the end of 1926, written on the day of Yom Kippur, three years after his arrival in the Land. He observed that

> the Zionism that brought us here has become a farce, and the few decent minds are toppling because of this certainty that they do not want to admit to. It certainly might be more adventurous to live here and the great opportunity offered for workers to have interior freedom without overly strong bonds is certainly the best currently available. . . . yet I came here without illusions and I have unfortunately remained in this state. The Land is a hotbed of passions that no longer depend on us: in three years we will know whether there is still a hope of a Zionist outcome. I cannot find a bridge that leads from my secret hopes to the busy hubbub of nationalist, petit-bourgeois and lying words. These were not the forces that attracted me. But at least I have found one thing: peace.[87]

His secret aspirations had nothing to do with the political movement of which revisionist Zionism was merely the darker face. Revisionist Zionism had indeed become a farce with its mass gatherings adorned with "nationalist, petit-bourgeois and lying words," in which false messianic phraseology was evoked merely for political purposes, carrying with it, apocalyptically, Zionism and the entire Yishuv. This was not the Zionism that had led Scho-

lem to the Land. When it became obvious that Zionism had been defeated and was no longer able to determine or influence events, Scholem began to think of putting up a kind of private resistance and defense. He thus began to understand that the capitulation that awaited him would force him to retreat into silence, into peace, a silence that was perhaps similar to the one, albeit in a very different context, he had theorized about and practiced as a strategy of dissent against the Jewish youth movement in Germany. This was a peace that preceded and heralded the *Tod in der Professur*,[88] as he claimed in a poem composed in around 1942, a kind of simultaneous death and salvation in academia or studies that meant Scholem withdrawing from the public eye and disappearing into *Wissenschaft*. The Jewish University where he taught from 1925 and that in 1933 gave him the first chair of studies in the mystical tradition of the Kabbalah was the rock to which he clung. Here was his exile, his isolation, and his defeat but also his paradoxical salvation, which was so fragile, impossible, and appealing.

"Weimar in Jerusalem,"[89] or as Idel observed, in this "little Germany,"[90] viewed with irony, when not with suspicion or contempt by others, particularly by the *Ostjuden* who made up most of the Yishuv—who could only consider Scholem and the circle of German Jewish intellectuals who had taken refuge there as strangers, the uprooted: [91] "All these Hans, Arthurs and Hugos."[92]

One of the crucial matters that engaged Scholem in Eretz Yisrael was the matter of language, or of modern Hebrew, more specifically the change from Hebrew as a ritual language and the language of holiness, to spoken and vernacular Hebrew[93] If remaining silent in Hebrew.[94] had been part of a specific personal and solitary strategy in Scholem's youth, aimed at saving at least the language of holiness from verbiage and linguistic convention, on arrival in Palestine he became more aware than ever of the dangers that threatened Hebrew, which had now become the language of communication. In a letter sent to Franz Rosenzweig, to mark his fortieth birthday, Scholem advised the philosopher, who together with Buber was translating the Scripture, that "the Land is a volcano. It plays host to the language."[95] Hebrew was more likely to be a destructive force than the Arab threat: "Must not the abyss of this language of holiness that is instilled into our children erupt again?"[96] he wondered. The thing that worried him was the unknowing, even unconscious, updating of Hebrew that he believed he was seeing in Palestine, where everybody believed that they could talk about everything. In Scholem's opinion, it was not possible to fully secularize Hebrew. He believed that it was not possible to speak in the language that in Kabbalistic terms was made up of the Names of God, taking away its "apocalyptic sting,"[97] which continued to be present in traditional expressions and messianic categories that are voiced without any awareness in everyday Hebrew. And this is a problem, warned Scholem. Ravitzky observed in this regard that the relation-

ship between Hebrew as a holy language and Hebrew as a secular language is the same as the relationship Scholem believed to be present between theology and politics.[98] "It is simply impossible to empty words that are full to bursting except at the cost of the language itself."[99] There is an illusion of being able to do so, to speak a language like all the others, and so much has been done consciously or unconsciously in this direction that the spectral *volapük* spoken on the streets of Jerusalem is the outcome of attempts to secularize Hebrew. However, by passing the language down to our children, we allow the language of the ancient books to live again in them so that they may again be revealed. "This Hebrew is woeful,"[100] prophesied Scholem, and future generations will be bound to pay the price of this meeting.

> When language is turned against the speaker . . . will our youth be able to withstand the mutiny of a holy language? Language is the Names. The force of the language is enclosed in the Name, its abyss is sealed therein. After we have daily evoked the ancient Names, it is no longer in our hands to keep their powers at a distance. Once they have reawakened they will make their appearance because we have evoked them with great violence. . . . Because the Names have their own life and woe upon them if they did not, woe to our children who would be abandoned without hope to the void.[101]

A volcano lies dormant in many terms whose original religious meaning has been radically altered or has been lost in modern Hebrew. A volcano, an abyss that opens up before those who speak Hebrew today, wrote Scholem, an abyss that threatens to swallow our children, the future generation, because they—and this is the point—are no longer aware of the Powers that they are evoking through language. Scholem believed that only by being aware of the abyssal forces of tradition, of the Names that are constantly evoked in Hebrew as the language of everyday life would it be possible to avoid the ruination due to change that otherwise awaited not the transition generation, who were still aware of the power of tradition and the ancient Names—even though Scholem still expressed himself in German as is reflected in the same letter addressed to Rosenzweig, which he nevertheless ends with the date in the Jewish calendar—but the generation that will come after, in other words a generation that had grown up entirely in Eretz Yisrael.

In accordance with Zionism, which Scholem saw as meaning the rebirth of the people in their own Land and the construction of a new Jewish society in a social, cultural, and even linguistic sense, through a link with tradition even as that tradition was renewed (and this also applied to the use of Hebrew), the passage from the Book to life did have to take place through a creative change but this had to be done in the form of its ancient image. Only this conscious link with the origin, with tradition and its deepest layers, this *religio*, could lead to the hoped-for new beginning in the Hebrew language as well as in the Land.

In 1929, a number of serious riots and clashes took place between Arabs and Jews following the issue of the rights of both parties over the Wailing Wall, as already discussed. These riots led to a radical change in the Zionist movement and radicalized the relationship between the Arab population and the Yishuv. One of the things that happened as the clashes spread throughout much of the country was the formation of a dangerous bond between religious conflict and the conflict between two forms of nationalism, Arabic and Jewish. Scholem, as an expert in the Kabbalah, was officially asked for guidance about the religious status of the Wall. He refused to cooperate and give an opinion because the issue, in his view, was not religious but political and thus had to be resolved through talks and negotiations. His refusal was interpreted as a kind of betrayal of the Zionist cause.[102] Scholem's appraisal of the riots was on close scrutiny much more complex, especially if one reads his letters to his mother Betty, who was apprehensively following the reported events in the German press. The great bitterness he felt, he explained to his mother, was not so much toward the Arabs, who were evidently incited and made fanatical by lying propaganda, but toward the behavior of the British, who were reluctant to step in to defend the Jews. Even if he did not know how it would end, he was sure that wherever the Jews had defended themselves alone, with the use of weapons, the worst had been avoided.[103] "After this experience," he commented, "the Jews will undoubtedly have to arm themselves better, even if they do it illegally."[104] His public, official position was, however, different. This was partly due to his membership of Brit Shalom, which believed agreement and understanding with the Arabs to be a priority, as we have discussed, while also believing that responsibility for the riots largely lay with the nationalist radicalism of the revisionists. For the latter, and for Jabotinsky, the conflict reveals how important it was to attain a Jewish majority in the country: the Arabs would never accept the Jews unless compelled by force and the weight of numbers. After the riots and following the ensuing discussion within the Zionist movement, the influence of revisionists on official Zionism and on Weizmann seems to have grown in strength, while the role of German Zionism and Brit Shalom seemed, on the contrary, destined to undergo a sharp decline within the Zionist executive and Weizmann's leadership.[105] There was a growing gap between the characteristics of Zionism in which Scholem and the few, yet significant, members of Brit Shalom recognized themselves, and the positions of official Zionism, not merely of Jabotinsky's revisionist Zionism. In this context, furthermore, the boundaries between religion and politics were necessarily blurring, meaning that Scholem saw the different assessment of the Arab question as symptomatic of a much deeper conflict concerning the internal face that Zionism was increasingly assuming, as evidenced in a dramatic letter that he sent to Buber on 22 May 1930:

> I do not know if you share my state of mind, but it would be useless to deny that the face of the Zionist cause has dimmed catastrophically for us (by that I mean the men who essentially support Brit Shalom). Our gloomiest ideas are not ultimately limited to the political question of the Arabs as a whole, but instead concern the face that is of necessity definitively forming at a historical moment of the cause when risking its existence threatens to prove a problematic enterprise. The torment of this situation . . . is nearly unbearable: we must nevertheless say to ourselves that the way *we* understand Zionism is of no avail (and this is the decisive moment, no-one can be mistaken about that) if its face, even the one turned toward itself, proves to be that of Medusa. This is of course the moment for which many of us are here: we believe that it would be intolerable to have to say that your cause has failed without you even having been here. The terrible interior condition, the total demoralisation that is clear to us here leaves little hope that we can still do something, because historical moments do not come back and we cannot recover what has been lost with regard to the revival of Judaism in this half-year. If a determined and established image of Zionism should become a thing of the past in our own times, where will that leave us and how would it still be possible to continue with the debate that would no longer be based on a living force but stem from the magic false bottom of a stage on which ghosts would act and emerge from the wings, and where even the saddest of all these matters, the matter of blame, would acquire a terrible but just, true and incontrovertible actuality. I believe I have given you some idea here of the situation in which we now live.[106]

The face of Zionism, a Zionism "in whose name I am here as a slave," was completely changed. The face of Zionism had become the face of Medusa that turns everything to stone and it is clear, in this situation, that the Zionism that had taken Scholem to Eretz Yisrael was now, as he had already said, a historical event that reflected a stage of history that had ended, leaving a ghostly, spectral existence in the Land, without any reference to the present. The important thing now, for Scholem, was no longer to hope but to be present at its overthrow with a firm mind:

> Whatever it has to offer, [wrote Scholem in an unpublished letter of 24 December 1930] now that it has turned its innermost hope into the subject of political trade, Zionism is condemned. This trade was not what pushed the best Jews to plunge into such a risky enterprise. The hope of restoring a continuity that seemed to have been jeopardised by Europe, the *religio*, the effort of reconnecting to vital forces that were absent: all this was perverted by false jingosim, until all that remained was a mere carapace in the guise of a messianic caricature.[107]

They had missed a historical opportunity. Spiritual rebirth and the revival of Judaism had not burgeoned in the Land but had been enslaved and reduced to mere slogans by a chauvinist nationalism antithetical to the Jewish "national genius."[108] "When we thought we would be saved from an age that has gone off the rails, safe in a new consciousness of people and homeland, we threw

ourselves at the mercy of the worst Powers of destruction that had grown up by perverting our ideal."[109] This was very probably the "question of blame," to which he had referred in his letter to Buber: Zionism had its own responsibilities in the situation that had been emerging in the country, because the Powers of destruction were rooted in the perversion of the Zionist ideal. They were nourished by the very ideal that they profaned. Zionism had thus "misjudged the invisible forces of history."[110] "In order to see themselves confirmed in their own existence, the people wanted to hasten their rebirth through hypocrisy and dishonor, and found the 'teaching (that came) from Zion to be, in its rhetoric, the true master of the chimera'"[111] a chimera that, as he had said, was "kept miserably alive by metaphysics."[112]

A turning point imposed by events and established by the 17th Zionist Congress in 1931 was to prove decisive in convincing Scholem of Zionism's loss of direction. The revisionists led by Jabotinsky demanded that the Congress should define as the final goal of Zionism the creation of a Jewish State that would involve both banks of the Jordan and enjoy a Jewish majority and self-government. In the end, Jabotinsky's demands were rejected for several reasons. Nonetheless, Weizmann, who was a moderate and did not like the extreme positions taken up by the revisionists[113]—continuing as he did to embody "the quintessence of the European Zionist"[114]—was not re-elected as president of the Zionist Organisation and Nahum Sokolow took his place.[115] The Congress defined Zionism as the intention of resolving the Jewish question in Palestine and also passed a resolution containing a form of words stating that one nation should not override the other. The phrase about the "Jewish majority" was omitted from the wording stating the goal of Zionism to be that of "resolving the Jewish question in Palestine."

The resolution of the 17th Congress was seen by members of Brit Shalom and by Scholem—who mistakenly declared all the points submitted by the revisionists to have been approved when actually only part of them were accepted—to be a decision taken against themselves. While the members of Brit Shalom could be seen as interpreters and spokespersons of the official Zionism and supporters of Weizmann's leadership until 1929, now, after the resolution of the 17th Congress, they believed that the leadership had left the field open for the revisionists.[116]

The decisions taken by the 17th Congress gave Scholem plenty of food for thought and persuaded him, if this was still even necessary, of the failure of Zionism as he understood it. Nevertheless, at least publicly he believed that there was still room for action and exerting some sort of pressure and influencing events, although private papers and letters reveal his total and absolute disenchantment with the situation. In an article in "Sheifoteinu," the official publication of Brit Shalom, Scholem disagreed with the claim that the final goal of Eretz Yisrael was to settle the Jewish question: in his view the problem was not at all to resolve the Jewish question but to create a living

national home, an independent cultural center. Together with the Brit Shalom group, he demanded a new direction with the clear renunciation of the idea of a Jewish State, a State that went hand-in-hand with resolving the Jewish question, and declared:

> Brit Shalom cannot agree that the ultimate goal of Zionism is that of resolving the Jewish question. . . . We wish to awaken Zionism from a superfluous and dangerous dream, a dream that has nothing to do with the substance of Zionism as the Jewish revival movement. . . . If the Zionist dream consists of numbers and "boundaries" without which it cannot exist, then it is destined to fail, or rather it has already failed.[117]

In an editorial entitled *Achad Ha'am and us*, Scholem confirmed that he agreed with the thoughts of Achad Ha'am at least on one point: "Official Zionism completely rejects the notion that Zionism has a role in the existence of the Jews even though it cannot solve the Jewish question. This is our position: like him [like Achad Ha'am, author's note] we see the promises to the people of full redemption through Zionism as a total adulteration of its mission that could lead it off its path." And he concluded: "We were Zionists at a time when the law of the spiritual center was still allowed in Israel and we do not intend to renegotiate it."[118] In a later editorial in the autumn of 1931, Scholem returned to the need to achieve the rebirth of the Jewish people by establishing the center in Eretz Yisrael, without which, in his view, there could be no revival of Judaism. If the aim of Zionism, according to Scholem, was to guarantee the continued existence of the Jewish people, not from one generation to the next but to "secure it for once and for all, Eretz Yisrael is the medium of this historical shortcut whose purpose is to achieve national immortality."[119] In the same editorial, Scholem argued, as he had done on other occasions, that Zionism won, but in exile: "We were victorious on a battlefield where we had no intention of fighting."[120] Zionism had won in exile because it had paradoxically managed to prolong the existence in exile that it had actually been intended to put an end to. This had come about because it gave a new meaning to people that were otherwise subjugated and subject to others, causing them to regain dignity, awareness, and perspective. Zionism had indeed renewed the life of Jews but in exile, ensuring their survival for a couple of generations. In doing so, it had made the preparatory work a priority, meaning that this became an end in itself and self-sustaining. "The Zionists," he would say, "became lost by the wayside."[121] This early victory left them with only a little strength to build a physical edifice in Eretz Yisrael.

> I hereby uphold the opinion, that the Zionism that aims to concentrate its efforts on revitalising Judaism in Eretz Yisrael is only a sect. . . . For my part, this understanding is not a tragedy. It is clear that only a few want to fight the

> battle of Zionism until the end, but the word sect has an unpleasant ring to the ears of many Zionists. It is a kind of insult to the "state goal" of Zionism.

And he concluded: "It is highly doubtful whether the assumptions that made Zionism our ideal are still valid. *Zionism runs the risk of becoming an episode in the history of our nation*."[122] Zionism therefore risked becoming only a historical phenomenon, a parenthesis in the life of the nation, an episode, as he stated previously. This failure was also due to historical factors, explained Scholem, such as its alliance with the British power that had determined its position "in relation to declining forces and not to nascent forces. . . . Zionism had forgotten to join up with the latent, depressed forces that will arise and reveal themselves in tomorrow's future,"[123] in other words with the Arabs. Zionism was therefore faced with an alternative that offered no way out:

> It will either be washed away by the waters of imperialism or be burned in the fires of the awakening East. There is mortal danger from both sides, but the Zionist movement must still decide. I very much doubt whether Zionism, which is to say the small sect that still wants to build its centre in Eretz Yisrael, will be able to free itself completely and disappear from the political arena (which would be the ideal solution, even though it is Utopian). . . . All I know is that this is the only option. Zionism must return to the sources that it betrayed at the time of its victory. It would be better for the movement to go back to being small but aware of its path rather than stay in its decomposing, perverted state and die along with the reactionary forces that it drew behind it as a result of its original misdeed, in other words its pyrrhic victory. Even if we will not yet be victorious, and the fire of revolution will consume us, it is better that we are on the right side of the barricades.[124]

This was the dramatic tone of the editorials that came out between 1929 and 1931, in which Scholem spoke on behalf of Brit Shalom. He used the expression "we," and it was as the representative and interpreter of the group that he expressed his own personal beliefs, well aware of the crisis that the political project had entered.[125] In a letter written to Walter Benjamin, in August 1931, Scholem summarized and explained many of the themes that had emerged to date and set out the bankruptcy statement of Zionism for his faraway friend.

> Unfortunately I can only answer the modest question you asked at the end of your letter, on my opinion of the latest Zionist Congress, with an analysis of the extremely regrettable situation into which we have been thrown by the Congress. To tell you the truth, developments over the past two years, which culminated in the conclusions of this Congress, had already highlighted the radical rift that occurred between my understanding of Zionism—which, focusing on a revival of Judaism, I characterise, basically to good effect, as a mystic and religious path—and empirical Zionism that is inspired by the im-

> possible and provocative caricature of a claimed "solution of the Jewish question." . . . I do not at all believe that it can offer something like a "solution to the Jewish question" in the sense of restoring the Jews to normality, just as I do not believe that the problem can be resolved in Palestine in this way: to me the only point that has always been and continues to be clear is that Palestine is *necessary*, and this was enough, no matter what might be expected from the reality of this world: here no Zionist agenda has ever tied anybody's hands.[126]

The goal of Zionism was therefore not to resolve the Jewish question, he emphasized, a solution that would mean in effect normalizing the Jewish people, in other words a new form of assimilation that would essentially deny the uniqueness of the Jewish destiny.[127] Scholem believed that the Jews were not and should not become a people like any other: "and you will be for me a holy nation and a kingdom of priests," already resonated through his early writings. The thing he cared about was rather the immortality of the nation, the Jewish genius, whose spiritual rebirth would be protected and guarded by the action and knowledge of a few, a rebirth that could be encouraged gently into existence provided it was not forced and overturned by mass political activism.

> It is easy to say the specific forces that set out to derail Zionism, but who knows if you will be able to understand me: Zionism was killed off by winning. It won in advance in the spiritual sphere and thus lost the strength to achieve victories on earthly terrain. It performed, by virtue of a gigantic effort, a function that *it was not at all intended to perform. We won too soon*. Our existence, our sad immortality that Zionism had succeeded in offering definitive stability, is once again secured in time: for the next two generations but at the most terrible price. Even before we achieved and implemented the reunification of life in the Land and the language, we lost our strength over terrain we never thought we would have to negotiate. Once Zionism had won in Berlin, within an empty space from the viewpoint of our analysis, it could no longer win in Jerusalem. The need imposed by history had long been fulfilled, it is just that we had not realised, and now it is clear that the historic mission of Zionism was completely different from the one that it assumed. . . . The aim is now therefore no longer to save ourselves—because only oblivion could take comfort in an unfair victory—but to throw ourselves into the abyss that opens up between our victory and reality.[128]

In this letter, Scholem therefore emphasized and explored his convictions: Zionism cannot and should not set itself the ultimate goal of resolving the "Jewish question" but must take to its heart what is briefly described as Jewish renewal or national immortality. He also reaffirmed to his friend his conviction that Zionism had spent all its efforts in its early victory when it won in the empty space of Germany and it had therefore been defeated in the Land because those efforts were no longer available for the work in Palestine. The letter also went on to specify the reasons for the defeat of Zionism:

> We ourselves evoked the forces of destruction in the vacuous passion of a vocation that had entered into the public domain: our catastrophe began at the point where the vocation did not refrain from debasing itself, where the community was not developed in proper secrecy and betrayal of the hidden riches that had attracted us became a positive aspect of the demonic propaganda. The moment when our cause became visible was also the moment of its destruction. The meeting with Sleeping Beauty took place before too many paying spectators for it to have a happy ending. Zionism spurned the night, exhibiting the procreation that should have been everything to it on a world market kissed by too much sun, where the craving for living reality has degenerated into prostitution of the last remnants of our youth.[129]

Religious mystic Zionism (which fed unobserved on secret messianic causes) lost above all because political activism exploited those same messianic tensions—evoked moreover by the same Zionist ideal, the utopian return to Zion—for political ends, taking them out of their invisibility and exposing them to the cold light of day. A cause that could act only by remaining secret, the hidden asset of a sect, was therefore betrayed, as he had already pointed out. In his letter, Scholem once again referred to the mass rallies organized by the revisionists, whose "demonic" propaganda made use of messianic religious phraseology that was absolutely taken out of context, as already stated, by employing messianic claims as an ingredient of political propaganda and struggle. Even though Jabotinsky's agenda was a secularized political agenda, he used messianic language for propaganda purposes at the mass meetings: Jabotinsky spoke about "meeting of the exiles" and about "redemption of the Land," debasing the language and preventing messianic tensions from acting in secret. The making visible of what should have remained hidden and acted on in secrecy was the very thing that brought Zionism down. As he stated in an article on "Davar," in 1929:

> I firmly deny that Zionism is a messianic movement and that it is entitled to use religious terms for political purposes. The redemption of the Jewish people, that I hope for as a Zionist, is in no way identical to the religious redemption that I hope will take place in the future. . . . Zionist ideals are arrayed on one side and the messianic ideal on the other and they come into contact with one another in the grandiose rhetoric of popular meetings that sometimes fill our youth with a new Sabbateanism that is doomed to fail. The Zionist movement has nothing to do with Sabbateanism.[130]

Zionism spurned the night, or rather it exposed to the light of day something that should have acted under cover, in other words its secret messianic aspirations," its "hidden treasures," thus debasing and selling out the last remains of its youth, aspirations, and ideals that had led Scholem and others to Palestine, ideals now prostituted on the "world market." "Where can salvation bloom for Zionism?," the young Scholem had wondered in 1916.

"In secret clubs,"[131] he had replied, specifying that "*The secret club is the fertilisation stage*, people can only be fertilised in small portions, then there is definitely another stage, the one when Zionism emerges in another sense onto the surface or rather goes beyond it."[132] A work carried out in secret, by a small community, that of the Zionists, "kept under constant pressure by the great truth,"[133] he had said and now he found, on the contrary, that it had not surfaced at the appropriate time or in the appropriate manner. This idea of a spiritual élite was consistent with the plan to build a spiritual center in Eretz Yisrael to renew Judaism as Achad Ha'am understood it. "This was not the place that we had come to find, this was not the light that was to make us catch fire,"[134] he wrote to his friend. Scholem was therefore left to go down in the awareness of defeat, the failure of the Zionist project that had led him to Palestine. A failure for which Zionism, which degenerated into hubris, or arrogance, was responsible: "Between London and Moscow"—in other words between British imperialism and the social utopia achieved by the settlers through working the land—"we strayed into the desert of Araby on the way to Zion, and our own hubris blocked the path that leads to the people. Thus all we have left is the productivity of one who is going down and knows it. It is this productivity in which I have buried myself for years, for, after all, where should the miracle of immortality be concealed if not here?"[135]

"We too went out to find redemption and found only exile," he had written a few weeks before, in July 1931.

> All our efforts succeeded only in prolonging the long exile that no one knew how to end. It is very likely that the orthodox Jews who said that redemption drops unexpectedly out of the sky were right. The history of Zionism is a terrible parable of this truth. . . . Redemption is just as hidden as before and there is no star to light the darkness of the swamp of exile in which our soul is about to be driven.[136]

"The splendor of Zion seems to have vanished,"[137] we read in a poem of 1926 that, like a large part of the author's poetry, evokes the Kabbalistic world, albeit cryptically, as is typical of the esoteric tradition.[138] Scholem voiced his disenchantment with the light that he had gone out to find and was not there or had gone out. "I have lost the faith / that brought me here,"[139] he went on to write at the beginning of the 1930s. In the lyrics, which he deliberately composed in German, Scholem voiced his dissipated hopes, the "rejected happiness,"[140] to the point of representing himself as a "sentry on the brink of nothingness."[141] Scholem subsequently downscaled the scope of that defeat, dampening the harsh tones of that time: "Once I thought," he was to say in 1975 in an interview with his interlocutor Muki Tsur, with a simplicity that left open more doubts than it resolved, "that there is perhaps a hidden side in the historical process in this country that could have a metaphysical and religious significance. . . . But who knows if there is a hidden

core in Zionism?"[142] The Zionist cause, as far as Scholem was concerned, abandoned the concrete realm to withdraw into study, into *Wissenschaft* which was in a sense the place, albeit problematic,[143] of the renewal and continuation of the Jewish tradition that he had hoped for as a Zionist. Scholem was indeed to dedicate the rest of his life to the study of the Sabbatean movement—the great seventeenth-century political movement promoted by Jewish mysticism, which culminated in the figure of the mystical Messiah Sabbatai Zevi, who represented at the same time a liberating event and a political catastrophe that befell Jewish history—and the study of the mystical tradition of the Kabbalah. Necker even described him as an "esoteric Zionist."[144] This may have been not least to gain a better understanding of what had been his experience of Zionism,[145] and to understand if and to what extent the Sabbatean movement was a forerunner of Zionism, thus formulating the unspoken question that underlay this experience: whether Zionism had been a wasted opportunity, if everything was still unfinished, or if everything was complete.

"Little wonder that overtones of messianism have accompanied the modern Jewish readiness for irrevocable action in the concrete realm when it sets out on the utopian return to Zion," Scholem was to write in 1959, actually developing lines of thought that had arisen long before, between the end of the 1920s and the 1930s.

> It is a readiness which no longer allows itself to be fed on hopes. Born out of the horror and destruction that was Jewish history in our generation, it is bound to history itself and not to meta-history; it has not given itself up totally to Messianism. Whether or not Jewish history will be able to ensure this entry into the concrete realm without perishing in the crisis of the messianic claim which has virtually been conjured up—that is the question [. . .]?[146]

It is a question that *Wissenschaft* can ask but cannot answer, and to which there is perhaps no answer. Only Scholem the poet was able to deal with this question because the thing that linked poets to the masters of the Kabbalah was "their belief in language as an absolute. . . . It is their belief in the mystery of language which has become audible."[147] In his last poem, written in 1967, dedicated to Bachmann who, after visiting the Roman ghetto, had written: "In Rome I saw in the ghetto that it is not yet the evening of all days,"[148] Scholem echoed her by saying: "In the ghetto you saw what few can see / and what memory too easily mislays, / that nothing that happens is entirely fulfilled / that evening has not yet fallen on all the days."[149] The last verse, which echoes Bachmann to the letter, can be read as a reinforcement of the verse that precedes it: "Nothing that happens is entirely fulfilled."[150] Melancholy, disillusionment, lack of fulfilment and thus waiting, putting off, procrastination, make up the constellation that Scholem sets to rhymes and echoes that seem to come straight out of the Book of Lamentations—the

importance of which he had reflected on in Germany—even though, and this is something that should give us pause for thought, it was done through the medium of the German language. It was as though the German Jew Scholem[151] was only able to express the richness of the language and culture of his youth as much as that of Judaism on his return to Jerusalem—a return pervaded by the awareness of his long exile—showing what Germany had had and had lost. It was as if only here in Jerusalem could Jewish emigration fulfill what German Jewishness had actually been, despite the criticism and diatribe that Scholem had aimed at the complex phenomenon of *Deutschjudentum*, of which he was in any case a rebel son.[152]

Nothing is completely fulfilled: this is the most ancient of all messages, even if the price paid for it is too high and imposes a temporary, suspended, and continually deferred existence.

"We lived in the cracks of history: / That which was not completely fulfilled offered us security."[153] A lack of fulfilment that protected and also denied the value of existence, always awaiting fulfillment, the final evening, it is true, but still leaving room for hope, unfolding to Utopia. A frustrated Utopia: "The time of redemption has passed"[154] and the figure of exile seems to seal the Jewish existence even in Zion: "We can never be fully at home": / The messengers of Zion speak to us of happiness / but we once anticipated it, / And the call to the return cannot be renewed."[155] There is an echo in these lines of an early victory, messianic impatience, perhaps, the irrevocability of a historical time, of a missed opportunity. It is impossible not to see in these messengers of happiness Scholem's take on the most profound diagnosis of Zionism to be offered by a non-Zionist Jew, the philosopher Hermann Cohen, who is said to have exclaimed with regard to the Zionists: "Those guys want to be happy!"[156] Cohen probably grasped in the utopian return to Zion one aspect of what Scholem would have defined, in a contiguous context, as the *hubris* of the Jews,[157] in other words an aspiration to a life unaware of the pain of the diaspora, no longer provisional and suspended but rooted, desirous of concreteness, the outcome of fulfilment,—"precisely understood, there is nothing concrete which can be accomplished by the unredeemed"[158]—the mirage of an existence no longer lived "in the cracks of history," but capable of realizing itself in this, the life of fulfillment, no more "*lived in deferment,* in which nothing can be done definitively":[159] "All the days have an evening."[160] Perhaps it was this very recall to happiness—to put an end to an existence that "possesses a tension that never finds true release: it never bends itself out"[161]—that had led Zionism to victory in the empty space of exile, winning the hearts and minds of the young Jewish generation, thus winning an early victory in the spiritual realm that would be lost in the historical realm. We do not know the extent to which Scholem shared this aspiration to happiness in his choice of Zion as well as in the fact he remained in the Land, in spite of everything. We can, however, be sure of

the fact that Scholem uses the term "we" in his poetry as well as in many of his esoteric writings concerning metaphysical despair over the defeat of the Zionist utopia. He therefore identified himself with a necessarily transitional generation that still remembered the oldest message: "nothing that happens is entirely fulfilled," but which, like his beloved Kafka, had lost faith in direct messages. Scholem entrusted that ancient message to poetry, to its blank spaces, to his private writings, to secret papers, insofar as the writings of a scholar who was certainly not unaware of his own greatness could remain so.

NOTES

1. F. Kafka. *Briefe an Felice, und andere Korrespondenz aus der Verlobungszeit*, edited by M. Brod, Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 1967, pp. 703–704.

2. G. Scholem, *An Ingeborg Bachmann*, in Id., *The Fullness of Time. Poems*, translated by R. Sieburth, introduced and annotated by Steven M. Wasserstrom, The Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, 2003, p. 124. See Italian edition: G. Scholem, *Il sogno e la violenza. Poesie*, edited by I. Kajon, La Giuntina, Florence 2013, pp. 88–89.

3. G. Scholem, *Per comprendere l'idea messianica nell'ebraismo*, in Id., *L'idea messianica nell'ebraismo e altri saggi*, edited by R. Donatoni and E. Zevi, with comments by S. Campanini, Adelphi, Milan 2008, p. 45.

4. Scholem was not without humor and he used to say that not even Israel had stopped the Jews in their continual journey, as Paul Mendes-Flohr recounted to me when we spoke in Jerusalem, in the summer of 2009. I would like to thank him for this conversation. Scholem wrote the following to Ruth Nanda Anshen from Jerusalem on 15 October 1980: "The definition of Zionism I gave until 1950: Zionism is a movement against the excessive wandering of the Jews. How could I have been more wrong?," G. Scholem, *Briefe III, 1971–1982*, edited by I. Shedletzky, Beck, Munich 1999, p. 216.

5. See. I. Shedletzky, *Introduzione* to *G. Scholem, Briefe I, 1914–1947*, edited by I. Shedlezky, Beck, Munich 1994, p. vii.

6. These aspects were also recently recalled by G. Bonola, *Le delusioni del messianico in Gershom Scholem*. *Fedeltá mediante il rinnegamento*, in *Europe e Messia*. *Paure e speranze del XX secolo in eredità*, edited by P. Cipolletta, "Rivista di Filosofia" issue 4, 2008, p. 153.

7. See D. Myers, *The Scholem-Kurzweil Debate and Modern Jewish Historiography*, in *Modern Judaism*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Oct. 1986), p. 265.

8. See M. Cavarocchi Arbib, *Le delusioni di un sionista*, in "Micromega," (3) 1997, p. 193.

9. As Lucca observed, "the Scholemian imprinting that came about due to the truly unique environment that was Jewish Berlin between the wars, led . . . the young Scholem to create an image of Jewish existence that was one of a kind," see E. Lucca, *Una visione dialettica della storia ebraica. Gershom Scholem e l'eredità del messianismo*, Doctoral thesis, 2010–2011 academic year, p. 156.

10. See G. Scholem, *Da Berlin a Gerusalemme. Ricordi giovanili*, edited by G. Busi, Italian translation by S. Campanini, Einaudi, Turin 2004, p. 195.

11. D. Weidner, *Gershom Scholem, Politisches, esoterisches und historiographisches Schreiben*, Fink Verlag, Paderborn 2003, p. 32.

12. G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, I Halbband 1913–1917, with the collaboration of H. Kopp-Oberstebrink, edited by K.Gründer and F. Niewöhner, Jüdischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, p. 108.

13. F. Rosenzweig, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, Vol. 1, Nijhoff, The Hague 1979, p. 704.
14. G. Scholem, *The Fullness of Time, Poems*, cit., p. 14.
15. S. Moses, *Gershom Scholem. La storia segreta*, in Id., *La storia e il suo angelo*, Italian translation by M. Bertaggia, Anabasi, Milan 1993, p. 202.
16. G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, I Halbband 1913–1917, cit., p. 59.
17. On the importance of Molitor with regard to Scholem's meeting with the Kabbalah and on the Jewish or rather Frankist sources of the Catholic philosopher with regard to the Kabbalah, see the recent contribution by S. Campanini, *Da Giacobbe ai Giacobini*, in G. Scholem, *Le tre vite di Moses Dobrushka*, edited by S. Campanini, Adelphi, Milan 2014, particularly p. 228–230.
18. *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Science of Judaism), which came out in the nineteenth century, in line with the mainly Protestant philosophical, cultural, and religious environment in Germany at the time, is characterized by a strictly rationalist approach that denies the value of Jewish mysticism and the Kabbalah, which was deemed an irrational and obscurantist legacy. On Scholem's complicated intellectual relationship with the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, see the interesting observations of Lucca, in E. Lucca, *Una visione dialettica della storia ebraica*, cit., pp. 105–113.
19. See G. Scholem, *Da Berlin a Gerusalemme*, cit., p. 39. As Lucca observed with regard to Scholem's readings in his early youth, "philosophy, Bible, Talmud, Romanticism and Kabbalah blended into one another and constituted his means for combating positivist rationalism and the neo-Kantian interpretation of Judaism proposed by Hermann Cohen," see E. Lucca, *Una visione dialettica della storia ebraica*, cit., p. 116.
20. G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, I Halbband 1913–1917, cit., pp. 63–64.
21. *Ibid*., p. 81.
22. *Ibid*., pp. 82–83.
23. *Ibid*., p. 331.
24. *Ibid*., p. 403.
25. *Ibid*., p. 121. In Hebrew, "schalem" means "whole," "complete." See also G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, I Halbband 1913–1917, cit., p. 327.
26. G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, I Halbband 1913–1917, cit., p. 120. Much has been written in the literature on Nietzsche's reception by *fin de siècle* German Jewish culture and Scholem. See, among other references, *Jüdischer Nietzscheanismus*, edited by W. Stegmaier and D. Krochmalnik, De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1997; S. E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany (1880–1990)*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1992; J. Golomb, *Nietzsche e Sion. Motivi nietzschiani nella cultura ebraica di fine Ottocento*, translation and afterword by V. Pinto, La Giuntina, Florence 2006; V. Vivarelli, J. Golomb, A. Orsucci (edited by), *Nietzsche e gli ebrei*, La Giuntina, Florence 2011.
27. See R. Alter, *Scholem und die Moderne*, in *Gershom Scholem, Zwischen den Disziplinen*, edited by P. Schäfer and G. Smith, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1995, p. 173.
28. G. Mattenklott, *Ebrei in Germania*, Italian translation by S. Campanini, afterword by C. Sonino, Feltrinelli, Milan 1992, p. 80.
29. G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, I Halbband 1913–1917, cit., p. 87.
30. See S. Moses, *La storia e il suo angelo*, cit., p. 201.
31. See D. Weidner, *Gershom Scholem*, cit., pp. 85–103.
32. M. Cavarocchi*, Aspetti inediti di Gershom Scholem*, in "Rivista di Filosofia neo-scolastica," issue 2–3, Year xxxii, September 1990, p. 177.
33. G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, I Halbband 1913–1917, cit., p. 343.
34. *Ibid*., p. 360.
35. *Ibid*., p. 375.
36. *Tikkun*: repair, restoration, reintegration, perfecting, transformation, renewal, catharsis. Kabbalistic terms. I would like to thank Haim Baharier also for the explanations of this term he gave me.

37. G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, 2 Halbband 1917–1923, edited by K. Gründer, H. Kopp-Oberstebrink and F. Niewöhner, with the collaboration of K.E. Grözinger, Jüdischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2000, p. 15–16.
38. *Ibid*., p. 286.
39. In the original text, the quotation is in Hebrew.
40. *Ibid*., p. 29.
41. G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, 2 Halbband 1917–1923, cit., p. 363. Ari, or rather Isaak Luria.
42. *Ibidem*. On Safed, or Safad, see M. Brenner, *Breve storia degli ebrei*, cit., p. 118: "The most important Kabbalists of the sixteenth century, such as Moses Cordovero and in particular Luria, worked in Safad. . . . Luria provided the conceptual structure of the most important messianic movement in the history of modern Judaism."
43. G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsä und Entwürfen bis 1923*, 2 Halbband 1917–1923, cit., p. 205
44. *Ibid*., p. 621.
45. *Ibid*., p. 622.
46. On the complex and multi-faceted literature on the relationship between messianism and Zionism in Scholem, see the recent seminal work by E. Lucca, *Una visione dialettica della storia ebraica*, cit. (particularly chapters IV and V) as well as the less recent contribution of D. Weidner, *Gershom Scholem*, cit., and the excellent article by G. Bonola, *Le delusioni del messianico in Gershom Scholem*, in *Europa e Messia,* cit., pp. 153–167. Notable historic contributions have also been made on this subject by David Biale and Irving Wohlfahrt. Biale believed that Scholem rejected the identification of Zionism with apocalyptic Messianism, Zionism being a kind of "neutralised Messianism" that would expunge the destructive element. Zionism is certainly linked with Messianism in the sense that it set out to fulfill at least part of the messianic promise: restoration of Jewish political sovereignty in the land of Israel, but it did not identify itself with this. See D. Biale, *Gershom Scholem Kabbalah and Counter History*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.)-London 1982, particularly p. 94–97. Wohlfahrt saw the esoteric link between Zionism and Kabbalah, Zionism and mysticism, as being similar to the link that Benjamin believed runs between historical materialism and theology; see on this subject: I. Wohlfahrt, "*Haarscharf an der Grenze zwischen Religion und Nihilismus*" *Zum Motiv des Zimzum bei Gershom Scholem, in Gershom Scholem, Zwischen den Disziplinen*, cit., pp. 176–256, particularly p. 199. Last but not least, we must remember the acute and penetrating study by Stephan Moses on the aporias of messianism, S. Moses, *Gershom Scholem. La storia segreta*, in Id., *La storia e il suo angelo*, cit., pp. 199–225. In writing this chapter, I am also indebted to the studies of Marina Cavarocchi Arbib. See M. Cavarocchi Arbib, *Aspetti inediti di Gershom Scholem*, "Rivista di Filosofia neo-scolastica," 2–3, year xxxii, April–September 1990, pp. 169–178; M. Cavarocchi Arbib, *La secolarizzazione in Gershom Scholem*, in M. Micheletti and A. Savignano, *Ateismo e società*, Editrice Benucci, Perugia 1993, vol. II, pp. 63–79; M. Cavarocchi Arbib, *Le delusioni di un sionista*, "Micromega," (3) 1997, pp. 191–194. I would also like to mention the contribution of C. Altini, *Berlin, Atene, Gerusalemme. Filosofia, politica e religione nel mondo moderno tra Gershom Scholem e Leo Strauss*, in Gershom Scholem, Leo Strauss, *Lettere dall'esilio, Carteggio (1933–1973),* edited by C. Altini, La Giuntina, Florence 2008, p. 9–111. On the relationships between Zionism and messianism, see also the interview granted by Scholem himself to Muki Tsur: *In compagnia di Gershom Scholem, in Due conversazioni con Gershom Scholem, su Israele, gli ebrei e la qabbalah*, edited by G. Bonola, Quodlibet, Macerata 2001, particularly pp. 77–83. Here he affirmed "Messianism is truly a very vast and complex matter, not at all simple. I wrote about it on two occasions in my books, defining what I thought was the price that the Jews have paid for messianism: a very high price. Some have inferred that I am anti-messianic. I feel a strong inclination toward messianism. I have not given up. But perhaps my writings suggested to some people that I am a Jew who rejects the messianic ideal because the price has been too high." *In compagnia di Gershom Scholem*, cit., p. 56. More generally, for the purposes of our exploration, we must consider the observations of Moshe Idel, who was once a pupil of Scholem and is now one of the greatest scholars of the Kabbalah at international level: "Scholem is undoubtedly the scholar who had a greater interest than any other in the history of messianism. He

believed that it played a key role in the entrance of the Jews to modernity. From a theoretical viewpoint, Scholem believed it important to distinguish between messianism and Zionism. "Things are not very clear from a methodological viewpoint," in M. Idel, *I percorsi della Cabbalà*, Italian translation, La Parola, Rome 2007, p. 211.

47. G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, I Halbband 1913–1917, cit., p. 403.

48. *Ibid*., p. 195.

49. G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, 2 Halbband 1917–1923, cit., p. 144.

50. G. Scholem, *Briefe I*, cit., pp. 217–218.

51. M. Cavarocchi Arbib, *Aspetti inediti di Gershom Scholem*, cit., p. 177.

52. M. Cavarocchi Arbib, *Le delusioni di un sionista*, cit., p. 192.

53. See D. Weidner, *Gershom Scholem*, cit., p. 99.

54. On this subject, see D. Bidussa, in Id., *Il sionismo politico*, Unicopli, Milan 1993, particularly p. 38.

55. See S. Moses, *La storia e il suo angelo*, cit., p. 201.

56. G. Scholem, *Briefe I*, cit., p. 219 (the original is in Hebrew).

57. *Ibid*., pp. 220–221.

58. G. Scholem, *Der Zionismus wird seine Katastrophe überleben*. (The text, still unpublished, is in a binder entitled "Esoterica, Metaphisica. Über Judentum und die esoterische Seite des Zionismus 1917–1933, incl. einige Briefe die zur Sache gehören," kept in the Scholem Archive at the Jewish National University Library: jnul, Arch. 4* 1599, 277/ I, issue 52).

59. G. Scholem, *Der Zionismus wird seine Katastrophe überleben . . . ,* cit.

60. See S.H. Bergman, *Tagebücher und Briefe*, Vol. 1: 1901–1948, edited by M. Samburski, introduction by N. Rotenstreich, Jüdischer Verlag bei Athenäum, Königstein 1985, p. 261.

61. M. Brenner, *Breve storia del sionismo*, cit., p. 101.

62. *Ibidem*.

63. A. Ravitzky, *La fine svelata e lo stato degli ebrei. Messianismo, sionismo e radicalismo religioso in Israele*, translated by G.P. Tasini and G. Lenzi, Marietti, Genoa-Milan 2007, p. 12. Some observations of Andrè Neher about the figure and the role of Rabbi Kook are enlightening:

"Abraham Kook saw Zionism as the rekindling of lost sparks. . . . Rabbi Abraham Yitzhaq Kook was the first of this series of great pioneers to have the courage to commit to Zionism, not merely profane, but profaned, desecrated, to fight side-by-side *with* the profaners. His courage came to him from the *messianic* conviction of Zionism, and the fatal implication of the risk that it was, yet again, a pseudo-messianism."

He "saw political and profane Zionism as an adventure that was *necessary* for elevating the profane to the sacred. . . . It is no coincidence that Rabbi Kook made his *aliyah* to become a rabbi in 1904, incidentally not in Jerusalem, the place of the Sanctuary, but in Jaffa, the landing port (during that year and in the years immediately after) of Aharon David Gordon, Ben Gurion, Ben Zevì, the revolutionaries and rebels of the second *aliyah*, the non-religious, anti-religious socialists, whom the "religious members" of the yishuv from the 1882 *aliyah* refused work in the Jewish villages surrounding Jaffa. Rabbi Kook set out to be the Rabbi, companion and contemporary of these men."

In A. Neher, *Chiavi per l'ebraismo*, introduced by T. Federici, Marietti, Genoa 1988, p. 74–76. In an interesting contribution, Raz-Krakotzkin highlighted the links running between the approach of Scholem and that of Rabbi Kook, see A. Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Golem of Scholem: Messianism and Zionism in the Writings of Rabbi Avrahams Isaac HaKohen Kook and Gershom Scholem*, in Ch. Miething (editor), *Politik und Religion im Judentum*, Max Niemeyer, Tübingen 1999, p. 223–238.

64. M. Brenner, *Breve storia del sionismo*, cit., p. 101.

65. G. Scholem, *Der Zionismus wird seine Katastrophe überleben*, cit.

66. See on this subject D. Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, cit., particularly pp. 97–105.

67. Chaim Weizmann, who was born in Belarus in 1874 and died in Israel in 1952, played a fundamental role in the Zionist movement and also had a crucial part in the Balfour Declara-

tion. He was the first president of the State of Israel. See G. Bensoussan, *Il sionismo*, cit., p. 1928 and *passim*.

68. These aspects were referred to by D. Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, cit., p. 100.

69. David Ben Gurion (1866–1973), Zionist politician of the first order due to his work in building and founding the State of Israel, and also its Prime Minister. See G. Bensoussan, *Il sionismo*, cit., p. 1305 and *passim*.

70. G. Scholem, *Der Zionismus wird seine Katastrophe überleben*, cit.

71. G. Scholem, *Die Verzweiflung des Siegenden* (1926), in "Esoterica, Metaphisica," cit. The text, still unpublished, is kept in the Scholem Archive, jnul, 4th Archive 1599–277–I, 57.

72. G. Bonola, *Le delusioni del messianico in Scholem, in Europa e Messia*, cit., p. 155: "From the outset, Scholem was . . . critical of the groups who saw the Jewish settlements in Palestine in terms of a fulfilled social utopia and the redemption of land through work."

73. G. Scholem, *Brit Shalom*, in Id., *Od Davar* (in Hebrew), edited by A. Shapira, Tel Aviv 1986, p. 61.

74. G. Scholem, *Briefe I*, cit., p. 222.

75. *Ibidem*.

76. In the original text in French.

77. G. Scholem, Briefe I, cit., p. 228. In 1920, Scholem wrote that Zionist despair concerned skepticism about the achievability of the visible, "they are completely disillusioned." See G. Scholem, *Tagebücher 1917–1923*, 2 Halbband, cit., p. 638.

78. M. Cavarocchi Arbib, *Le delusioni di un sionista*, cit., p. 193.

79. *Ibid*., p. 192.

80. See D. Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, cit., p. 100.

81. G. Scholem, *Briefe I*, cit., p. 228.

82. G. Scholem, sent to Ernst Simon, undated (1925?), in "Esoterica, Metaphisica," cit. 4th Archive 1599. The archival marking on the text is Gershom Scholem, Briefe an Ernst Simon, Jerusalem, 4–1599.

83. G. Scholem, *Die Verzweiflung des Siegenden* (1926), in "Esoterica, Metaphisica," cit. The text, still unpublished, is kept in the Scholem Archive: jnul, Arch* 4 1599, 277/1, issue 60.

84. Achad Ha'am, *Am, Scheidewege,* Erster Band, Translated from Hebrew by I. Friedlaender, Second improved and expanded edition, Jüdischer Verlag, Berlin 1913, p. 35.

85. G. Scholem, *Die Verzweiflung des Siegenden*, in "Esoterica, Metaphisica," cit.

86. *Ibidem*.

87. *Heute vor 3 Jahren* (1926), in "Esoterica, Metaphisica," cit. The text, still unpublished, is kept in the Scholem Archive: jnul, Arch* 1599/277/1 issue 60.

88. G. Scholem, *The Fullness of Time. Poems*, cit., p. 108.

89. G. L. Mosse, *Aus grossem Hause, Erinnerungen eines deutsch-jüdischen Historikers*, Ullstein, 2003, p. 334.

90. Idel, *Messianic Scholars: On Early Israeli Scholarship, Politics and Messianism*, "Modern Judaism," 2012, p. 41.

91. Scholem wrote in a letter to his mother Betty in April 1933: "The Germans see the Jews as foreigners. . . . Here the Jews, mainly the eastern Jews (Ostjuden), see the German Jews as foreigners. They see the German in them more than the Jewish," in B. Scholem, G. Scholem, *Mutter und Sohn in Briefwechsel* (1917–1946), Beck, Munich 1989, p. 297.

92. See S.E. Aschheim, *Beyond the Border, The German Jewish Legacy Abroad*, Princeton University Press, Princeton-Oxford 2007, p. 7.

93. See on this subject the very valuable essay by E. Lucca, *"Sull'orlo dell'abisso": Scholem e Rosenzweig sulla lingua ebraica*, in "Rivista di storia della filosofia," issue 2, 2013, p. 305320.

94. See G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, I Halbband 1913–1917, cit., p. 22.

95. G. Scholem, *Bekenntnis über unsere Sprache*. Sent to Franz Rosenzweig on 26 December 1926, in M. Brocke, *Franz Rosenzweig und Gershom Scholem,* in *Juden in der Weimarer Republik*, published by W. Grab and J.H. Schoeps, Burg Verlag, Stuttgart 1986, p. 148.

96. *Ibidem*.

97. On this matter, see A. Ravitzky, *La fine svelata e lo Stato degli ebrei*, cit., p. 10.

98. *Ibidem*.
99. G. Scholem, *Bekenntnis über unsere Sprache*, in M. Brocke, *Franz Rosenzweig und Gershom Scholem*, cit., p. 148.
100. *Ibid*., p. 149.
101. *Ibidem*.
102. See S. Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism*, cit., particularly p. 153, and D. Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, cit., p. 102.
103. B. Scholem, G. Scholem, *Mutter und Sohn in Briefwechsel*, cit., p. 202.
104. *Ibid*., p. 204.
105. On the nature of German Zionism and the topics in question, see H. Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe. The Distinctive Path of German Zionism*, cit., particularly pp. 181–206.
106. M. Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, Vol. II: 1918–1938, cit., pp. 380–381.
107. G. Scholem, *Nach fünfzehn Jahren: Selbstbetrug?*, in "Esoterica, Metaphisica," cit. jnul, Arch 4*-1599/265. The text was translated into Italian by M. Cavarocchi Arbib, in Id., *Le delusioni di un sionista*, cit., p. 193–194.
108. M. Cavarocchi Arbib, in Id., *Le delusioni di un sionista*, cit., p. 194.
109. *Ibidem*.
110. *Ibidem*.
111. *Ibidem*.
112. *Ibidem*.
113. On this subject, see W. Laqueur, *Der Weg zum Staat Israel*, cit., p. 491, and M. Brenner, *Breve storia del sionismo*, cit., p. 119.
114. B. Morris, *Vittime*, cit., p. 217.
115. On Nahum Sokolow (1859–1936), see G. Bensoussan, *Il sionismo*, cit., p. 1327 and *passim*.
116. On the subject, see S. Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism*, cit., particularly p. 137–151, and D. Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, cit., p. 103.
117. G. Scholem, *La meta finale* (July 1931), now in Id., *Od Davar* (in Hebrew), cit., p. 70.
118. G. Scholem, *Achad Haam e noi* (Autumn 1931), now in Id., *Od Davar* (in Hebrew), cit., p. 72–73.
119. G. Scholem, *Qual è la radice della contesa?* (Autumn 1931), now in Id., *Od Davar* (in Hebrew), cit. p. 75.
120. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
122. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
123. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
124. *Ibid.*, p. 82. On this subject, see A. Raz-Krakotzkin, "*On the Right Side of the Barricades*"*: Walter Benjamin, Gershom Scholem and Zionism*, Comparative Literature University of Oregon, 2013. In the essay, the author pointed out, among other things, the very close relationship between the goal of Scholemian Zionism, namely the building of a spiritual center, the bi-national idea, and the rejection of national chauvinism, which the scholar read as secularised messianism (p. 375). For Scholem, according to Raz-Krakotzkin, secular Zionism and not religious Zionism prepared the ground for messianism. See A. Raz-Krakotzkin, *Exil et souveraineté*, cit., p. 132.
125. See on this subject E. Lucca, *Sull'orlo dell'abisso*, cit., pp. 312–313.
126. Cit. in G. Scholem, *Walter Benjamin. Storia di un'amicizia*, translation and notes by E. Castellani and C.A. Bonadies, Adelphi, Milan 2008, p. 270.
127. See on this subject D. Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, cit., p. 104.
128. G. Scholem, *Walter Benjamin*, cit., p. 271–272. Attention has been drawn to this complex intellectual and historical climate by G. Bonola, *Le delusioni del messianico in Scholem*, in *Europa e Messia*, cit., particularly pp. 161–163.
129. *Ibid.*, pp. 272–273.
130. G. Scholem, *Sui tre misfatti del Brit Shalom* (24 November 1929), now in Id., *Od Davar* (in Hebrew), cit., pp. 88–89.
131. G. Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923*, I Halbband 1913–1917, cit., p. 448.

132. *Ibid.*, p. 449.
133. *Ibid.*, p. 448.
134. G. Scholem, *Walter Benjamin*, cit., pp. 273–272.
135. *Ibidem*.
136. G. Scholem, *Perché diventammo sionisti?*, now in Id., *Od Davar* (in Hebrew), cit., p. 92.
137. G. Scholem, *The Fullness of Time*. *Poems*, cit., p. 68. See the Italian edition, Id., *Il sogno e la violenza*, cit., p. 60–61. The crucial importance of these poems by Scholem was stressed by I. Wohlfahrt, "*Haarscharf an der Grenze zwischen Religion und Nihilismus*." *Zum Motiv des Zimzum bei Gershom Scholem*, in *Gershom Scholem, Zwischen den Disziplinen*, cit., particularly p. 198–220, and more recently in Italy, I. Kajon, *Poesia, Bibbia ebraica, Qabbalah: Gershom Scholem sul sogno e sulla violenza*, in G. Scholem, *Il sogno e la violenza*, cit., pp. 7–30.
138. See on this subject G. Necker, "*Wie Licht und Nacht*" *zur Bedeutung von Friedrich Hölderlin bei Gershom Scholem*, in *Gershom Scholem in Deutschland*, edited by G. Necker, E. Morlok, and M. Morgenstern, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2014, p. 104.
139. G. Scholem, *The Fullness of Time*. *Poems*, cit., p. 94.
140. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
141. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
142. *In compagnia di Gershom Scholem*, in *Due conversazioni con Gershom Scholem, su Israele, gli ebrei e la qabbalah*, cit., pp. 80–82. Here, in response to an observation made by the interviewer Muki Tsur: "If I understand correctly, you believe that the religious, mystical aspect of Zionism exists even though it does not manifest itself in political terms," Scholem answered: "It has not manifested itself. But one day it will happen. Perhaps we will have the privilege of being present at its manifestation. But in the meantime—well, that's why I have never addressed the subject." *Ibid.*, p. 83.
143. See D. Weidner, *Gershom Scholem,* cit., p. 416.
144. See G. Necker, "*Wie Licht und Nacht*" . . . , in *Gershom Scholem in Deutschland*, cit., p 111.
145. I would like to thank Silvano Facioni for his observations in this regard.
146. G. Scholem, *Per comprendere l'idea messianica nell'ebraismo*, in Id., *L'idea messianica nell'ebraismo*, cit., p. 45.
147. G. Scholem*, Il Nome di Dio e la teoria cabbalistica del linguaggio*, Italian translation by A. Fabris, Adelphi, Milan 1998, p. 90.
148. I. Bachmann, *Was ich in Rom sah und hörte*, in Id., *Werke*, edited by C. Koschel, I. von Weidenbaum and C. Münster, Munich, Zurich 1978, Vol. 4, p. 30. See the Italian edition: Id., *Quel che ho visto e udito a Roma*, Preface by G. Agamben, Italian translation by K. Pietra and A. Raja, Quodlibet, Macerata 2002, p. 110. See on the subject of this poem S. Weigel, *Gershom Scholem und Ingeborg Bachmann. Ein Dialog über Messianismus und Ghetto*, in "Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie," 115 (1996), pp. 608–616.
149. G. Scholem, *The Fullness of Time. Poems*, cit., p. 122. See the Italian edition, Id., *Il sogno e la violenza*, cit., pp. 88–89.
150. The line in question: "Daß noch nicht aller Tage Abend ist," "That evening has not yet fallen on all the days," is a very common idiomatic expression in German meaning: nothing is entirely fulfilled.
151. G. L. Mosse, *Gershom Scholem ebreo tedesco*, in Id., *Ebrei in Germania fra assimilazione e antisemitismo.* Giuntina, Florence 1991, p. 145.
152. See on this subject D. Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, cit., pp. 150–151. As the scholar observed, it is unsurprising that in the autumn prior to his death, which took place on 20 February 1982, Scholem returned to Berlin to stay there, for a long time on this occasion. Lucca, for his part, stressed Scholem's intentions to save the German language from decline after the end of the war; see E. Lucca, *Una visione dialettica della storia ebraica*, cit., p. 123. See A. Engel, Gershom Scholem's "Kabbala und Mythos," in *Gershom Scholem in Deutschland*, cit., p. 217.
153. G. Scholem, *The Fullness of Time*. *Poems*, cit., p. 122.
154. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
155. *Ibidem*. See the Italian edition, Id., *Il sogno e la violenza*, cit., p. 88–89.
156. See G. Scholem, *Da Berlin a Gerusalemme*, cit., p. 72.

157. See G. Scholem, *Die Theologie des Sabbiatianismus im Lichte Abraham Cardosos* (1928), in Id., *Judaica 1*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1963, p. 146. This has been referred to recently by I. Kajon, in G. Scholem, *Il sogno e la violenza*, cit., p. 139.
158. G. Scholem, *Per comprendere l'idea messianica nell'ebraismo*, cit., p. 45.
159. *Ibidem*.
160. G. Scholem, *The Fullness of Time*. *Poems*, cit., p. 122.
161. G. Scholem, *L'idea messianica nell'ebraismo*, cit., p. 45.

Between Exile and Refuge

Gabriele Tergit in Palestine

"I still think *Problem Palestina* my best book," wrote Gabriele Tergit in 1955. "I know today that I have behaved as a Don Quichotte. I was writing a book for German Jews who were either Zionists and didn't want to hear what I had to say or for German Jews who were not Zionists but scarcely Jews at all."[1] Even as she was writing it, she thought the book would be difficult to publish: "I think it is a book by someone," she admitted in a letter written in 1935, "who believes the Zionist theory of *Galut* to be a disgrace but who approves of Palestine. This should be an important issue in Germany, but I don't know whether such a thing is publishable":[2] "And who would ever publish dynamite?"[3] she speculated. And again: "So where *can* one write the truth about the Jews?"[4] she pondered with a certain Jewish *chutzpah*. These statements immediately tell us about her polemical and critical view of the Jews, Zionism, and Palestine, the independent judgment of a writer who felt, and was, deeply rooted in the diaspora. The title page of the publication, kept in the Marbach Archive and at one time by Jens Brüning[5] in Berlin bears a large defiant "NO" written in the author's own hand. All this makes it a discomfiting book that has still not been published in its entirety, arguably because of its critical stance on the Palestinian problem and other matters. She had to write the book in order to navigate and understand the harsh reality of a very special exile, an exile among the Jews, as well as to address the theoretical premises on which the country's construction was based—premises that Tergit came up against on her arrival in Palestine. The book or manuscript originally had 700 pages[6] and approximately one-third has survived. Tergit wrote it during the years she spent in Palestine, but particularly between 1935 and 1937. It consists of two parts that are not unconnected but

are largely autonomous. The first, provisionally entitled *The Spiritual Bases of Palestine*, is an intellectual debate and a reckoning with Zionism and its cultural premises from its origins to its establishment in Palestine. The second, now mostly published, consists of a collection of short and pithy observations in a polished journalistic style, small poetic *Kabinettstücke*[7] pieces, as they were described by her friend Rudolf Olden, on the situation and the people in Palestine[8] that, as Monica Lumachi observed, "represent . . . a way of processing the collective and personal drama of exile."[9]

Gabriele Tergit, or Elise Hirschmann (her real name), was born into a Jewish family in Berlin in 1894. Her family lived comfortably because her father ran his own cable factory. After a fairly conventional education for a girl at that time, Tergit then went on to become one of the few women to study history and economy at the Universities of Heidelberg, Frankfurt, and Berlin, following scholars of the stature of Ernst Troeltsch and Max Weber. She graduated with Friedrich Meinecke after writing a paper on the philosopher Karl Vogt. From 1924 to 1932, she worked as an editor on the prestigious newspaper *Berliner Tageblatt*, which was to regularly publish her own special take on life in Berlin and her observations, *Berliner Existenzen* (*Lives of Berliners*). These made her famous for her critical, committed, liberal-democrat stance. Tergit, who also contributed to other well-known publications such as the *Weltbühne* and the weekly *Tage-Buch*, also proved herself as a writer particularly with the novel *Käsebier erobert den Kurfürstendamm (Käsebier conquers the Kurfürstendamm)*, which came out in 1931. This was inspired by Berlin, and that city's world of advertising, culture, and finance. Tergit was one of the leading journalists in Weimar Germany, and a thorn in its side due to her enlightened-liberal intellectual views and her trial reports, to the extent that she soon became hated by the far right and the National Socialists. After a threatening raid at her Berlin apartment by the Sturmabteilung, which was nevertheless foiled, in 1933 she fled to Czechoslovakia, from where she could still carry on her work as a writer and contribute to various German language newspapers. Here she hesitated before joining her husband, Heinz Reifenberg, who had already been in Jerusalem for a few months, working on an architectural commission: "In Jerusalem, Heinz was building premises for his brother's father-in-law, one of the founders of the University of Jerusalem."[10] She stayed where she was for various reasons, not least of which was the difficulty, as a writer writing in the German language, of continuing to work in what seemed to her a far-off eastern country. The thought of having to run a home under unknown conditions also made her hesitate: "I was scared, with good reason I must say, to stop working on my novel *(Der ewige Strom*, then *Effingers, author's note.*) but also about the idea of managing a home in an eastern country I was not used to. All this was like climbing a mountain."[11] Only later, in November 1933, did she join her husband with her young son Peter. Her desire not to leave him

alone and to save the marriage—an institution in whose strength and value Tergit firmly believed—rather than any wish to leave Europe or go to the Promised Land, plunged the writer into the tumultuous tinder-box that was Palestine under the British Mandate in the 1930s. She lived first in Jerusalem from 1933 to 1935 and then moved to Tel Aviv until 1938. Those years were decisive for the formation of the future State, even in political terms, due to the formation and consolidation of political parties and trade union organizations. Because the ruling administration granted economic independence to the local Jewish population, the Yishuv, she also observed and experienced an economic boom, massive land purchases by the Jewish Agency, modernization of agriculture and a dizzying urban growth aided, among other things, by the arrival of middle-class Jews from central Europe and Germany who brought capital and expertise.[12] A reality in the making and contradictory, even paradoxical in some respects, but a reality that the writer sought to grasp and understand by observing the country and its diverse population, suspended as it was between the old and the new. Tergit found herself caught up in an experiment that, with all its contradictions and paradoxes, was about to change the reference points of the Jewish world forever and shift the relationship between exile, diaspora, and Promised Land as well as that between liberal and emancipated Judaism (German in particular and Western in general) with which Tergit continued to identify herself—and Zionism, in other words the historical, cultural, and linguistic return of the Jews to their own heritage. Not a repatriation due to her Zionist beliefs—though her husband and even more so his brother, Adolf Reifenberg, may have been close to Zionism[13]—but rather a journey motivated by family reasons, where belonging and the ever-living bond with Judaism[14] admittedly had a certain, albeit not decisive, importance. Used as she was to the cultural effervescence of Berlin during the Weimar Republic, and its newspapers, the writer struggled, as we will see, to acclimatize herself to the situation in Palestine and its Yishuv, a struggle that also made itself felt physically. Shortly after her arrival, she was struck down by an unpleasant skin disease that tormented her for about a year. Even she believed this was psychosomatic in origin and, to make matters even worse, her husband went and caught polio. The thing that really stood in the way of her integration was the prevailing ideological climate among the Yishuv and the most radical Zionist views, as well as the treatment dealt out to German Jews, who were considered no longer Jewish and unwelcome guests. She repeatedly denounced this view as well as the fanatical imposition of the Hebrew language, which eventually persuaded her to leave the country. In 1938, together with her son and husband, she therefore left Palestine to go back to her old, beloved, and still free Europe and chose to settle in London. Here, after continuing to write and reflect, including on her Palestinian experience, and being elected secretary of the PEN-Club of German writers in exile from 1957 to 1981, she died in 1982.

To understand the reasons that prompted Tergit to leave Palestine, we must examine her relationship with Zionism as it unfolds in the first part of her book on Palestine. Tergit recounted in short but effective passages the century of Jewish emancipation in Europe and particularly that of German Judaism. This emancipation was never completed due to difficulties and the hostility of the outside world toward the Jews, who wished to integrate in their own countries, in their own languages and cultures. According to Tergit, herein lay the tragedy for which, as for every true tragedy, there is no solution.[15] The writer examined the first Zionist responses: those of Moses Hess and Leo Pinsker who, long before Freud, stated the Jewish question to be insoluble because it was rooted in the unconscious—and that of Achad Ha'am's cultural Zionism. She observed that from the outset there had always been two roads to Palestine: the road of national and linguistic revival for the eastern and Russian Jews, and that of salvation from personal threat for the western Jews.[16] Achad Ha'am, a modern man who was aware of the inevitable process of secularization, believed that only faith in the Jewish nation, not in religion, could give people the strength to endure suffering. While the emancipated western Jews had suppressed the national character of Judaism, striving to salvage the religion, Achad Ha'am rekindled the idea of Judaism as a State, giving up religion as a lost cause and thus creating in Eastern Europe a Jewish nation without confession.[17] While for Leo Pinsker and then for Theodor Herzl the aim was to find a refuge, to create a people with a State, thus providing a solution for the emergence of the Jews from persecution and anti-Semitism, for Achad Ha'am the aim was instead to find a refuge not for the Jews but for Judaism. Judaism had again to become the central essence of the Jews, and this would be achieved by bringing the Hebrew language back to life in Palestine. Tergit observed that Achad Ha'am's Zionist theory proclaimed that the solution to the Jewish question lay in separation from the outside world through "Jewishization."[18] The writer explained how this term came to represent the very essence of Palestine in those years, just as Achad Ha'am's Zionism dominated the Palestine where she was now living. In the context of our examination, it is interesting to note the very different observations made by Bergmann and Schlolem, who believed that the Achad Ha'am's spiritual Zionism had been overshadowed by his political ambitions, namely building the country and the future Jewish State. She observed that the central matter discussed in Palestine was not the problem of the Arabs nor that of the parties, nor the problem of the collective or individual forms of colonization but rather the problem of creating a Jewish culture through a knowledge of ancient literature and the construction of a new literature.[19] This meant that the imperative laid down to immigrants, observed the writer, was not that of offering them a refuge or welcoming them but for them to learn Hebrew. She quoted a telling episode in this regard: in 1935 the director of an immigration office explained that only those who

spoke Hebrew would be granted an immigration permit.[20] This was a very serious statement, especially considering the fact that in those years migration from Germany to Palestine had become a necessity for German Jews fleeing the increasingly outrageous and prohibitive living conditions imposed by National Socialism. The thing at stake was the survival of those involved in the Fifth Aliyah,[21] which from 1933 to 1935 brought some 18,000 German Jews to Palestine. The new arrivals were largely guilty, like Tergit herself, of not being Zionists and were reproached by the Yishuv for having traveled to the country not by choice but by necessity. These same migrants brought money and a work ethic to the country, creating opportunities for economic development yet, precisely for this reason, they were unpopular and reviled.

Something else that closed the Yishuv in on itself is the fact that Achad Ha'am believed that Hebrew literature was the only literature worthy of the Jews.[22] To demonstrate the impact of these opinions on the country's cultural policy Tergit quoted the socialist newspaper *Davar*, which wrote in 1935: "For a thousand years, the Jewish people have been miserably voiceless and stammering, for a thousand years they have been content with crumbs, all kinds of crumbs of language, and thus also crumbs of the soul; crumbs of thought fallen from foreign tables."[23]

For a proud Berlin Jew and a proven journalist and writer, being told that she was voiceless or stammering was the negation not only of her professional identity but also of her cultural and biographical identity. It was also the denial of solidarity and tolerance. Coming from an ancient Jewish family with a practicing Jew as a grandfather, Tergit knew and appreciated the religious life and its rituals she had experienced during her childhood in her grandparents' home. In Palestine she therefore decided to keep up the memory of the German and the family Judaism so dear to her. And she noted that Judaism had nurtured and nourished European values for five generations, leaving notable spiritual traces. Tergit cited not only Mendelssohn but also very different personalities such as Heine, Marx, Freud, Walter Rathenau, and Gustav Landauer, who were all united in considering Judaism a universal breeding ground open to other cultures and in constant contact with the world around it. During those years in Palestine, she claimed to have observed the denunciation and vilification of German Jews, who were criticized for their subservience to Germany and uprooting from Judaism. The eastern or Russian Jews did not consider the German Jews to be true Jews at all, and considered their rooting in the German culture the greatest disaster, not even condemning their expulsion from Germany: they believed that the fate of a host of Jews who supposedly had higher minds to be a matter of indifference to the Jewish people. She quoted a cultured eastern Jew who told her: "Heine was the greatest disaster for German Jews, only he was capable of presenting German culture so enticingly to them that they accepted it."[24] The hostility of the Yishuv, who were mostly Russian or eastern Jews, toward the German

Jews was simply a backlash against or revenge for the prejudices that western and especially German Judaism had nurtured against the neglected form of eastern Judaism before the war and in the Weimar Republic, as we have seen in previous chapters, and as we shall see later.

Tergit also felt that Achad Ha'am had a narrow concept of what it meant to be Jewish: he was not interested in multiplicity or variety but rejoiced only in being separately and solely Jewish, cut off from the surrounding world. The writer had nevertheless found out for herself that the truth about Jews lay in their variety, a multiplicity that she sought out and reiterated in journalistic sketches on the population of Palestine, as we shall see. These sketches never failed to observe and emphasize how the Jews were a people who had arisen out of a melting pot, like any other people. There is no Jewish physical type, she emphasized, one cannot speak of a race and maybe not even of a people.[25] Wherever the Jews went they acquired foreign blood, everywhere they went they assimilated outwardly due to climate, eating habits, and because they are human beings, even in their language.[26]

Tergit saw Achad Ha'am's theory as a dangerous voluntary reintroduction of the ghetto, a ghetto that western Judaism had fought with all its might to leave at the beginning of its struggle for emancipation and civil rights. Tergit contrasted the Zionism of Achad Ha'am with the character and example of Theodor Herzl, a man from a world far away and far different from that of eastern and Russian Judaism: the world of sophisticated *fin de siècle* Vienna, where the "handsome, world-weary and elegant" *Neue Freie Presse* journalist lived along with Schnitzler, Hofmannsthal, and Altenberg.[27] After much thought about how to solve the Jewish question, including mass baptism, Herzl wrote *Jewish State*, a pamphlet in which he saw the Jewish destiny as being founded on lack of land and power and claimed for his people sovereignty and a plot of land sufficient for their rightful needs. As Tergit observed, that sovereignty was not achieved and neither was the sufficient plot of land. The Diaspora and Palestine continued to exist, a fact that Achad Ha'am had prophesied, thus seeing Palestine only as a center of study, a cultural center for the Diaspora.[28]

Tergit believed that the Balfour Declaration was an important step toward a nation State, but this only granted a legal guarantee instead of statehood: "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 existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"[29] Despite the new rights, such as the setting up of the Jewish Agency to represent the Jewish people, the most important point (sovereignty) had not been dealt with. Tergit also believed that another central focal point of the situation in Palestine, which was

underestimated by both the Jewish and the British sides, had been and still remained the Arab question: the Arabs have indeed never acknowledged the Balfour Declaration. Jewish nationalism came into being at the very moment when Arab nationalism was also affirmed. In 1930s Palestine, Tergit saw the affirmation and clash of the two forms of nationalism and the construction of two new meta-identities, Zionist and Palestinian Arab, by their respective ruling élites who she claimed were working to quell the desire to live together, which was growing from the bottom up, as the historian Ilan Pappe observed.[30] The new Jewish meta-identity, explained Monica Lumachi, meant, among other things "wiping the slate clean as far as their European roots were concerned, ignoring their centuries-old heritage that had come about through contact between the Jewish communities and their surroundings"[31] and the consequent exclusion of Judaism from the Diaspora.

Unlike some representatives of Palestinian Zionism and the intellectual world of the Yishuv, who were also left-leaning, the writer did not underestimate the Arab issue but was definitely not well-disposed to the Arabs. She did not mythologize them but observed the dangerous rise of Arab nationalism that was combined with clear economic and cultural backwardness, as we will also see in the observations on Palestine and its two peoples in her reportage.

Tergit reminds us of the difference between the Zionism of Herzl, who claimed the right to colonization as a priority, and the pragmatic Russian Zionism, which aimed at gradual colonization and the purchase of individual plots that would bring rights. Herzl was a western Jew who had been accustomed to having rights for a century. His priorities were sovereignty and rights and he did not believe that these would be achieved by buying land. Ussischkin[32] believed, on the other hand, that whoever owned the land would then own the country. This was the contradiction from the outset. Herzl died and Ussischkin remained in charge.[33] "And so the Russian Jews came to Palestine to escape the massacres, turning their backs on everything, the language of their fathers, the names of their fathers, the faith of their fathers, intoxicated with a nationalism based on a flag, a language and the *Horra* dance (the dance practiced by young Russian Zionist Jews, *author's note*.) and an equally intoxicated form of socialism. They believed in a union of the proletariat from all countries and thus a united front of Jewish and Palestinian workers. Until the end, they believed that the struggles in Palestine came about because the Effendi, the Arab landowners, felt that their position as overlords was threatened."[34] This dangerous underestimation also came about due to removal of the Arab problem and the Arab refusal.[35] While Tergit recognized that Herzl's greatness lay specifically in what was *not* achieved in his design, she did not have any sympathy for those who called themselves his successors, in other words the revisionists who believed that the central problem was and remained the Jewish majority and the Jewish

State. They "wore brown uniforms and fought against humanism, the Socialists and the Zionist organisation. But they had no way of approaching the Arab question."[36] The Palestinian experiment of coexistence with the Arabs could have succeeded, emphasized Tergit, because Jews had always lived peacefully among Muslims. And this was definitely not a question of land theft by the Jews: the flourishing of the country due to the capital and labor of the Jews, which led to the land being reclaimed, encouraged illegal immigration by the Arabs rather than the Jews, as the mandatory government reported in 1935. Those two worlds, one Arab and the other Jewish, nevertheless lived divided: "There is an Arab financial world and a Jewish financial world, Arab homes and Jewish homes, Arab schools and Jewish schools."[37] The problem of economic cooperation between Jews and Arabs was actually a political and intellectual problem in the world of the Yishuv during those years. While the Jewish trade unions and the Socialists wanted to hire only Jewish labor, because the Jews who had emigrated had to be able to find a job and because the Jews had to become a normal people who had to turn their hands to anything, observed Tergit, the capitalists and Hashomer Hatzair, the radical socialists, saw this as a mistake. The former because Arab labor cost less and the latter because they were driven by proletarian internationalism. Tergit nevertheless saw all this as secondary as far as the Arab refusal was concerned. The Arabs did not want to be a minority in Palestine and were therefore against Jewish immigration, but the Jews were bound to want immigration and new land for immigrants. "The Arabs want the *status quo*: they would rather have the desert than live in the shade of the woodland belonging to the Jews. In short: Zionism is incompatible with the political aspirations of the Arabs."[38] Tergit observed that growing anti-Semitism on the part of Arabs, with consequent revolts in 1920, 1929, and 1936, was the factor that should really have made the Zionists realize that the Jewish question in Palestine was far from being resolved, that Palestine was part of the Jewish problem, and that the artificial division between assimilationists and Zionists, so dear to imperious Zionism, was nonsense: it had no reason to exist. For this reason too, the success of the Zionist project did not mean it was possible to question the legitimacy and the survival of Galut Judaism, guaranteed by rights.[39] There is no contradiction at all between emancipated Judaism and Zionism and they must not come into conflict, as Herzl was well aware. As Tergit observed, the fact that the Jewish problem had cropped up again in Palestine did not mean that Palestine was or could be the solution to the Jewish question. Zionism and Eretz Yisrael, emancipated Judaism and the Galut must and can coexist. As far as Palestine was concerned, if the solution proposed by the British Commission was to divide the country, the main issue for a country divided into a Jewish part and an Arab part would be the safety of the Jews, observed Tergit. "How safe is this small State in the midst of the Arab world?," she wondered with concern and

continued: "Will the money from World Jewry be enough for aircraft and air defence? However," she concluded "this small State has realised the dream of millions, the dream of a Jewish national State, where you can lead a Jewish life in the Hebrew language."[40]

Tergit then analyzed the great social change she was witnessing in Palestine, and observed that its economy was largely anti-capitalist and community-based. The writer went on to reflect on the men and the ideals behind this economy in the second part of her book on Palestine. Although the Kvuzots, the first forms of small communal settlements, did not exactly inspire admiration, they were certainly deeply respected. They brought together "all the collective ideals of our age: socialist ideals about radical abolition of private property for life, the same for all, and national ideals due to enthusiasm for the Jewish nation and faith in work on the land as the true source of national strength. . . . The kvuzots are Russian, like the entire country."[41] While she had some criticism for this community life and the German Jews who had come to it late struggled to adapt to it because of the extreme simplicity of life, the abolition of any personal life, and the imposition of Hebrew, she nevertheless acknowledged that this community life is "the most profound expression of Jewish Palestine, perhaps the most profound expression of the Jewish people in the modern age. . . . The kvuzots are the opposite of everything that the stupid world says about the Jews. These Jews work the land, labouring hard physically, without pay. There is no avarice, usury, greed, money or ambition. There is only peace towards the world."[42] Admiration for this new situation with regard to work and people that we had already found in Bergmann and would also go on to find in Else Lasker-Schüler, Arnold Zweig, and Paul Mühsam.

This new economic structure was another possible means of resolving what Zionism perceived as a moral necessity, in other words a radical change in the social composition of the Jewish people, transforming Jews into "productive" workers. Tergit nevertheless grasped in this very design the contradictions and the paradox of the Zionist project which, like anti-Semitic ideology, seemed to treat Jews as being unproductive beings, and saw a certain naïvete in considering "productive" work to be a moral requirement. There was also, she said, a lack of foresight and prudence in oversimplifying the idea of unproductive labor, without considering how difficult it had actually become to perpetuate this thinking with industrialization and the advent of machinery. In actual fact, as Tergit perceptively observed, the higher the percentage of professional people, the more a country is socially developed and productive: "The idea that production is achieved by hands and not minds is problematic."[43] This social and economic view was opposed by the liberal Herzl, who loved intellectuals and wanted to exploit them for everyone's good, while the modern nationalists believed that peasants were the only people producing and able to save the nation. Thus

> the great ethical ideals of Gordon and Achad Ha'am . . . persuade the best minds to waste their energies and creative efforts working in the fields and while the worst minds and cynics can make the most of city opportunities, the little men become clerks and the best men break stones . . . the smallest become politicians and the greatest rear chickens. . . . The transvaluation of all jobs is to blame. . . . The belief in redemption through work on the land is still a religion. . . . This religion of redemption through working the land is too narrow to be an ethical criterion of the Jewish people, even in Palestine.[44]

In this transvaluation of all values, Tergit saw the ideals of Russian Zionism in action, together with the mystique of blood and land typical of anti-intellectual forms of modern nationalism. She went on to conclude: "Proletarianising a morally and ethically elevated social group is not a solution for an individual or a nation. Social change may be a bitter social necessity but not a goal."[45]

Tergit brought to bear her non-Zionist perspective when she examined the two founders of Zionism—Theodor Herzl, father of modern political Zionism, and Achad Ha'am, who inspired cultural Zionism—and compared their impact on the Palestinian situation. Herzl set out to resolve the Jewish question, the suffering of the Jews, the *Judennot* through the Jewish State. Herzl's basic premise was that the Jewish question is a political matter that can be resolved through politics. Achad Ha'am's movement was spiritual. He took the struggle to the heart of each individual. The extreme consequence of this was a return to the ghetto, which Herzl had put all his efforts into escaping from.[46] Tergit believed that this movement was now dominant in Palestine because of the weakness of political Zionism, whose representatives certainly could not be regarded as revisionists. Achad Ha'am had the upper hand in Palestine, and the echo of his theories can clearly be discerned when he proclaimed in a public lecture: "Zionism is not the solution to the Jewish question and the welcome meted out to people in Palestine who did not come due to their pioneering zeal has led Zionism to a highly critical stage. The physical suffering of the Jews cannot drive Zionism: this must come about through the rebirth of the Jewish people."[47] Palestine was not therefore seen as a refuge for persecuted Jews, as Herzl wished, but as a necessary revitalization of values and an exclusively Jewish culture. Tergit stressed that the statistics confirmed that Herzl was actually right: immigration to Eretz Yisrael from 1922 to 1935 was prompted by persecution and need. Tergit also highlighted the contradictions within the Palestinian situation: the prevailing theory is inconsistent with the floods of Zionist immigrants. The theory that Palestine was only for people who came with enthusiasm contradicted the call to a great migration. Immigrants—and here Tergit was thinking in particular of the reviled German Jews—were not greeted with joy but with suspicion. This was underpinned by the negation of Herzl's truth: the suffering of the Jews created the Jewish State. Achad Ha'am believed that the hard life in

Palestine could attract only idealists and therefore it was necessary to create idealists. Herzl believed, on the other hand, that it was necessary to change living conditions and not people. "We do not need to create idealists but a good life."[48]

What seemed to her desirable in the current situation in Palestine and in the very critical stage that Galut Judaism was going through lay in the spirit of Herzl, "who loved people: try to create living conditions for the immigrants that give uprooted people the illusion of the old country."[49] According to the prevailing theory of the Yishuv, though, German Jews had been uprooted from Judaism and could only find their roots in Palestine. Tergit quoted a significant episode that illustrates the confusion generated by these theories. This happened to the German writer Arnold Zweig, whom she visited in Palestine, striking up a warm friendship. In a lecture, Zweig spoke of the dangers of being uprooted, meaning being uprooted from Germany, while the audience, who were Zionist through and through, thought he meant uprooted from Judaism. We will return to this topic in the chapter on Zweig.[50]

Achad Ha'am felt disgust for tolerance, but Tergit observed that Herzl believed this tenet was central to the construction of the Jewish State, and she repeated Herzl's words in this regard: "Zion is only Zion if tolerance reigns."[51] "Herzl wanted to create a model country, he wanted Jews without fanaticism. Palestine was an experiment, and also an example of social justice. It was an attempt at European colonisation on Asian soil. . . . And an attempt to achieve all economic forms."[52] If this was successful, it was only "in the sense that Herzl meant, because all these attempts were carried out without any coercion, purely through people deciding to go along with them."[53]

The writer believed that an additional deep-seated conceptual difference between Herzl and Achad Ha'am was evident in their assessments of the rights achieved by Jews in the Diaspora. While Herzl believed that emancipation and the rights handed down to the Jews were untouchable and had to coexist with the idea of a Jewish State,[54] Achad Ha'am believed that the rights were illusory and misleading. In his eyes, the situation of the emancipated Jews amounted to "external freedom and internal slavery."[55] This attitude is also in line with some stances adopted by German Zionism. In this regard, Tergit criticized some articles that had appeared in *Jüdische Rundschau*—the mouthpiece of German Zionism—which embraced the stylistic elements and slogans of anti-Semitism in order to condemn the assimilation of Jews in Germany. She quoted an article of 1935 in which the history of the Jews in Germany was defined as a history of "intruders to the detriment of the people," where the people in question were the Germans.[56]

She happened to hear this paradoxical opinion also at a meeting of socialists, where a German Zionist leader stated: "The Jewish question in Germany

has been settled in our favour."[57] Tergit believed that these views were rooted "in the ghetto nationalism of Achad Ha'am."[58] All this was, however, overtaken by the revisionists "who say that they represent Herzl's Zionism"[59] and wear a brown uniform in imitation of Rosenberg's doctrine. This shift was, according to Tergit, opposed by men such as "Nahum Sokolow, the president of the Zionist Organisation who, with Weizmann, displayed statesman-like courage in winning the Balfour Declaration for the Jews. He claimed at the Zionist Congress of 1935: "A new ghetto would not be a dream but a nightmare. . . . Do not give up on our programme: Eretz Yisrael is equal rights for the Jews of the Diaspora."[60]

One focal point of life in Palestine which hindered the establishment of German immigrants in that scenario was represented by the Yishuv's ostracism and condemnation of the German language in favor of the forced and imposed use of Hebrew. Language, different from one's own mother tongue is, as we know, a focal point for every immigrant and above all for every writer, whose real home is language. This problem and this stress assumed disturbing proportions in Palestine, however, because, as Tergit observed, although Hebrew had been the official language for twenty years, 92 percent of the Jewish population still actually spoke German at that time.[61] Hebrew had also been a dead language for centuries, observed the writer, and Jews had always spoken the greatest variety of languages throughout the ages.[62]

The matter of language cropped up in a different context for the eastern Zionists, whose dream was to break free from tradition and speak Hebrew as a living language. The western Jews did not, however, see any need for a revival of the Hebrew language, partly because they had already long been speaking the language of the peoples amongst whom they lived.[63] Instead of showing understanding and accepting a linguistic Babel that people could use for communication, fanaticism, and intolerance reigned in the country. Yiddish, let alone German, was excluded from the country, meaning that public life was in the hands of a tight circle. The situation was rendered even more absurd by the fact that Hebrew was rarely used, even by those who proclaimed it to be necessary: as soon as they could, people spoke in German or Yiddish. A language as difficult as Hebrew is a serious impediment to immigration, which should really be the thing that mattered to Palestinian Zionism. The imposition of Hebrew, however, meant that it was not possible for immigrants to communicate, exchange information, take part in public life, or feel themselves to be at home, well-liked, and accepted.[64] Tergit also deplored the fact that at university the lessons were conducted in Hebrew. This caused a brain drain, while every student should really have been able to understand and speak a European language.[65] As an example of the opposite view to ghetto-style cultural nationalism, she quoted the great violinist Huberman who defined himself as "Jewish, European and Polish."[66] Not a Zionist "but a person who by his deeds helps and encourages everything

Jewish, particularly when help is needed."[67] Huberman was able to establish the Jewish orchestra and have it conducted in 1936 by Toscanini, playing Brahms and Beethoven. Tergit believed that this great musician was a model that everyone should aspire to in Palestine: that of a passionate man who saw culture as an undertaking that was not specific and local but a means of opening up to the world through one's own cultural life. Only in this way—as well as through film and art in general—would it be possible to show the world a new Jewish slant on life. Tergit saw the establishment of a self-referential ghetto culture as a dangerous and unprofitable closing-off to the world and she saw the signs of this closure in the alphabet, in the calendar, in the avoidance of using a cross to indicate a plus sign, in the dearth of reading matter available in Hebrew, and in the fact that the entire world was encapsulated in an exclusively Jewish perspective.[68] For an immigrant Jew from Germany who was used to openness toward the surrounding environment, this situation meant spiritual death, isolation, and alienation. The press situation exacerbated this impoverishment and frustration: German immigrants were only able to read news translated from Hebrew in the few German-language publications. Fanatical use of Hebrew also led to a generational break that struck at the heart of the institution that had held Judaism together for centuries, namely the family.[69]

Young people spoke only Hebrew and scorned their parents who were still struggling to express themselves in that language, and at the same time losing the link with the Diaspora and with their Jewish past. In the cultural life of the Yishuv, dominated by the cult of the word, Tergit believed she was witnessing another distortion of tradition: the great Jewish ethic was being replaced by the cult of the redeeming word: "we want to redeem ourselves by working in the fields. The Hebrew word redeems."[70] The language was believed to hold the power of redemption, salvation, and magic, but it only expressed irrationalism, intolerance, and closure. She quoted the words of Gustav Landauer: "Only he who takes himself, his true and complete self, on the journey to his promised land—only he, it seems to me, cherishes his Judaism as a living possession."[71] We should be accepted and valued in this country along with all our baggage. Yet Zionism wants to make a clean sweep of our past in exile, of our Diasporan identity that arises partly out of contact with the surrounding world, with the place where we were born and where our roots lie.

> I am a great admirer of what is Jewish, [she wrote in a letter of 1974] and the great thing about Jews is their . . . love for truth. Zionism is the introduction of political spin, the introduction of self-serving aspects into Judaism. . . . All the foundations of Zionism are wrong from a Jewish point of view. A man loves his environment, he loves the street where he played. It is nonsensical to say that a foreign country should be more dear to him. ALL non-Jews hate Jews.

"Anti-Semitism is a hereditary psychosis," said the great Pinsker, the true founder of Zionism. "More nonsense and Nazi nonsense to boot."[72] Despite all the contradictions and problems she had experienced in Palestine and her criticisms against the most radical forms of Zionism, in the text of an unpublished lecture written during the war, Tergit looked to the future of that Country with a certain amount of optimism because "the idea of Palestine is more ancient" than the nationalism prevailing in Eretz Yisrael. The Country "can and will survive this."[73]

"As long as I was in Prague, I had the feeling that there was a Jewish people, that there was outrage against Hitler, that there was mutual solidarity. . . . The moment I got onto the boat, I had a completely different experience,"[74] she wrote in a letter from Jerusalem in August 1934 after several months living in the country. During the crossing, the writings of the famous Jewish and German novelist Georg Hermann in the Central Verein newspaper were high-mindedly and harshly criticized as inappropriate to bring along to Eretz Yisrael, worthy only of being thrown overboard. In short, her cultural world was judged from a Zionist perspective as reprehensible and worthy of condemnation. She heard it said that you could not set foot in the holy land with the mentality of a German or Berlin Jew. Thus began a personal journey that, once processed, was to open the second part of her book on Palestine. "There is no sign of sharing in the tragedy of German Jewry," she continued in her letter. "They actually believe that everything was fair. Why so many lawyers in Germany? And doctors, and graduates. 'Would you want 70% of lawyers in Tel Aviv to be Arab?' Zionist awareness of the dangerous distribution of jobs between German Jews is used here . . . to vindicate the Nazis who kicked the Jews out."[75] The disturbing analogy between Zionist *völkisch* ideology and the anti-Semitic prejudices and words typical of Nationalist Socialist ideology is yet again underscored in this case.[76] "From Vienna to Berlin, I have loved German Jewry in all its variety. I cannot tell you how bitter it makes me to see that here it is insulted and mocked to the point of ridicule."[77] In the same letter, she imagined what would happen to her beloved Herzl now if he arrived in Palestine. "He would be like any man in a hotel room and they would say to him 'So, first learn Hebrew, then we'll see.'"[78] But she also mentioned positive aspects that she elaborated on in her observations on the country and its inhabitants:

> The country really is one of the most beautiful places in the world. As for the people, the workers make a great impression and the best thing . . . is the principles and the behaviour of people in the kvuzots. But the upper-middle-class are terrible. Fanatical and stirred up. . . . Instead of preaching the doctrine of friendship between one Jew and another, they preach the doctrine of division between revisionists and Socialists, between eastern and German Jews. . . . Regarding the material conditions, everyone gets a job here, even my husband . . . has an excellent position. Minimum subsistence is important, but

> the spirit is even more important. . . . I have come to the painful acceptance that I count for nothing here, apart from my husband and my son. Sometimes, rarely, I write little things about the country. Some German magazine or other publishes them.[79]

At this point we come to some of the most significant issues she dealt with, evident in her theoretical writing on the Zionists as well as in a collection of "little things about the country." These truly acute and insightful observations were written in sophisticated prose and dealt with Palestine and its existence, the many different types of Jew she met, the different individual and collective forms of work, association, and settlement, the many urban and rural scenarios, the freedom to start from scratch, leaving tradition behind, the unlikely coexistence between Arabs and Jews, the desert landscape and the sea. Her stay in Palestine was not ephemeral and transient and her view of the country was not that of a tourist but that of a resident who had come from afar and was struggling to grasp the situation that she was subject to and forced to inhabit.

She wrote these pages to understand and depict a new and tumultuous world, sometimes engaging, sometimes bewildering, which often reveals an implicit desire and hope of being able to find a place for herself, an ability to enter and adapt even in that place, where all her bearings had been lost and where nothing, not even the stars, was in the right place any longer.

This is immediately evident in the work "Traversata 1933" [1933 crossing], in which the emigre feels strong nostalgia for the recent past that has already disappeared, symbolized by Ancient Greece—*Hellas*, classicism, humanism, the values of a *koinè* endangered by National Socialism. *Hellas* is somewhere over the sea, far away but yearned for. The beauty of Europe was born in that cradle,[80] as was its scope, and five generations of German Jews played their part in Europe, Tergit reminds us with pride and regret, perhaps even bitterness. The universe where she landed with a ship packed with the most diverse emigres was unknown to her. German Jews who had been swept off their feet with heavy hearts, but also Zionists who did not believe in immigration, only repatriation.[81] She alone was there to observe, surrounded by indifference. Even the moon was no longer in its proper place: "I no longer recognised the moon and the stars, which are the celestial consolation of a heart that suffers on earth. . . . The sun had set on freedom and humanism, but no one noticed. They did not even realise that the stars of their childhoods were following a different orbit. And so I found myself alone in a hostile cosmos."[82]

> Even the climate, let alone the moon and the stars, no longer followed any known rules. It is no longer the good old European climate with the regular rhythm of the seasons following one another: flowering, bearing fruit, and dying. Here in Palestine there is a dry season and rainy season.[83] The climate

> does not flow with man, it goes against him. It is not easy to adapt to having no seasons or different seasons and the lack of sunsets. Here we go from light to darkness.

We remain misfits and it is clear that this physical discomfort is indicative of a more complex psychological unease. This short passage on the climate was deservedly published by Robert Weltsch in *Jüdische Rundschau*, the official mouthpiece of German Zionism, but it did not lead to anything else because Tergit's observation on the fearsome wind known as the *chamsin* seemed to her readers politically incorrect and anti-Zionist.

And if Greece was there in the background, apparently sharing the same sea as Palestine, here she observed, "the sea is dead":[84] "The sea laps the shores of the country, that is all."[85] She noticed how the international element was growing in Palestine at the expense of the native element, even though nationalism was also growing at the same time and putting a stop to the mingling of cultures.[86] She noticed how the Arab villages had grown organically over time, while the Jewish settlements had just been set down, juxtaposed, erected out of an act of will but not yet rooted in the landscape, and what was old was thoroughly beautiful while what was new was thoroughly ugly.[87] The writer observed that Arab Palestine had remained as described in the Bible through the millennia.[88] She believed it would be difficult to establish cooperation and coexistence between the extreme backwardness of the Arabs and the modernity imported by the Jews. "There is Allah, here is success. There are thorns, here is research. There is the East, here is not Europe but a mixture of Russia and America."[89]

Jerusalem, the eternal city, inspirer of age-old nostalgia, seemed to her to be full of contradictions and typified by difficult coexistences. The elegant quarter of Rehavia was inhabited by a cosmopolitan and cultured bourgeoisie, a bourgeoisie that could live anywhere, an international bourgeoisie that had solved all its problems: "There is no communication at all between Rehavia and the Wailing Wall. They have stopped complaining about their lost homeland."[90] Yet it is in Jerusalem that she came across a form of Judaism that is "two thousand years old."[91] She saw it in their age-old gestures, bending over their books in the ghetto of Mea Shearim. "They cross the centuries. They are another form of humanity, another time."[92] It is a Judaism that imposes itself, a Judaism that has always considered itself in exile, that weeps over lost Jerusalem. Perhaps due to the very fact that this "republic of the learned"[93] still considered itself part of the Galut and spoke Yiddish, Tergit felt a kinship with it and a sense of shared exile. This "ghetto" Judaism that was also a generator of free thought was dear to her: the third generation had sprung from its loins, "the Disraelis, the bankers, the innovative chemists, Heinrich Heine and Mayer Amschel Rothschild."[94] This Judaism that had remained eternal and unchanged over the centuries

lived on unperturbed and unaltered throughout the world, in Grenadierstrasse, Whitechapel, and Krakow, everywhere the same, everywhere in exile. Nationalism and Zionism were not at home in Mea Shearim. Nothing had come full circle for this eternal Judaism, the waiting was evident in the eyes of those who sought life between the white pages and black ink of the Book. Yet in Rehavia, Tergit observed, "The Jewish question is finally dead and buried."[95]

While Jerusalem is a city of contrasts, tradition, and the overcoming of tradition, Tel Aviv[96] "pulses with life. . . . In Tel Aviv you can find Europe, hard-working young people who are marvellous, dynamic and enterprising."[97] Tel Aviv is a city without tradition inhabited by new Jews who want to forge their own lives with their own hands, with a growing number of inhabitants, that is destined to soar like prices on the stock exchange. "Tel Aviv is inhabited by happy and cheerful Jewish people."[98] You can see them during the feast of Purim, the unmissable event in the city. Even the Arabs flock there to watch and wonder. "Here you can sit in cafes as if you were in old Europe";[99] "You can live well among the Jews in Tel Aviv";[100] "Tel Aviv is a mere stripling. It is nothing yet, but immortality awaits it."[101]

And if "Haifa is the frontier, it is Europe, global politics, rich suburb of villas, petroleum and cement factories, suburb of the grand social experiment of the kwuzah, it is high-rise building and naval base,"[102] Akko reminded her that the persecuted cannot indulge in any luxury or any beauty. The cities were so different from one another, but ancient Jaffa was different again. And the private settlements that Tergit visited were also different to one another. In these small and not so small production companies, she was able to closely observe the transformation of certain non-Zionist members of the German Jewish *Bildungsbürgertum* into ordinary workers, one becoming a rough, silent farmer, the other becoming a simple chicken breeder.[103] But there was always the pride of producing quality merchandise, of giving the best of themselves: these German Jews had brought their work ethic and thrift with them and they managed those settlements as they would have done in Germany. She also observed, in other settlements, how life in Palestine brought about a modernization that had an inevitable impact on tradition, accelerating secularization. "My grandmother in Poland was still wearing a wig . . . , my mother was wearing a modern short skirt in about 1900,"[104] her daughter in the settlement is wearing shorts. More generally, what she saw in operation in Palestine was a Jewish youth that no longer observed traditions, a rebel youth that went to the land of their fathers but no longer went to the synagogue, like the young revolutionary from Galicia who broke with tradition in 12 years, cut up his *payots* or ritual ringlets, arrived in Palestine, managed to set up a shop selling pipes and bathtubs, brought his parents over to live with him and now felt free to jump on his roaring motorbike and

smoke cigarettes on the beach in Tel Aviv on the Sabbath "almost as though they were a small burning flame of freedom."[105]

She examined the idea of the kwuzah, an attempt to establish a new way of living. They were seeking to create a form of economy combined with the highest form of social justice. It was an experiment to see how life would be if everyone lived communally. "The kwuzah seems to be a way to resolve the burning problems of humanity."[106] You give up the achievement of personal well-being and the joy of a personal life, personal food, joy for the woman you love, and in return you get protection and help from the community. The family in the singular is dead. On this subject, Tergit emphasized the problematic nature of the end of the family, which had been the glue that had held together the Jewish people for centuries, and how neither family nor religion counted practically anything for the kwuzah. You may or may not agree, but here you can see the transformation of a leggy Berlin ballet dancer into an orange grower.[107]

While Tergit felt bound to stress that one could hardly speak of a single Jewish people, Jewish tradition came to her assistance in the form of the various celebrations of the Passover that she attended. She reminisced about the Passover of her childhood at her grandparents' house,[108] but now she saw and followed the Passover of the Samaritans,[109] the Passover at Jerusalem,[110] the Passover in the farming community[111] and the Passover of the orthodox Jews in Tel Aviv,[112] which were all very different. Everyone celebrated in his own way, everyone was a Jew in his own right. And each feast was part of tradition, it was legitimate. In that strip of land, German Jews and eastern Jews, Russian Jews and Sephardic Jews, who were all so different from one another, even physically, in their clothes, customs, and language, yet again demonstrated the variety of the Jewish people.

She noted how the tragedy of the German Jews had been overlooked because no one had considered the seriousness of the fact that the German Jews were used to laws in Germany and now they were no longer able to act outside the law. An incomparable tragedy. The world was not ready to accept the German Jews because "the world is increasingly moving away from humanism and liberalism."[113] A statement made by the person she was speaking to, a Russian Jew, is symptomatic: "You see, the Jewish question . . . the thing is that by then the German Jews were no longer proper Jews."[114] She told the story of a young German doctor, a Zionist, who realized while on the boat heading for Eretz Yisrael, that her life was now in pieces, how difficult it would be for her to abandon the language, German, of which she had mastered every nuance to the bottom of her heart and overheard, with the deepest sense of loss, this conversation: "Over there we can do without Liebermann, Mr Reinhardt, all the junk of assimilated German Judaism. My road as a Jew and a German: how ashamed I feel!"[115] This sense of bewilderment was not at all appeased by the welcome she received

on the mainland, quite the opposite. As confirmation of the prejudices and stereotypes surrounding the Yekkes,[116] the derogatory nickname used to ridicule the German Jews, Tergit heard a Polish Jew exclaim: "Let's dig a hole in the bottom of the ocean and drown all the Yekkes in it,"[117] the German Jews brought disease, the Yekkes are even responsible for the potholes![118] Another Polish Jew explained to her:

> The German Jews have always felt themselves to be German . . . assimilation is the greatest disgrace of our people, they did not want to be Jewish, but it was all in vain because it was imposed on them. Those who are coming to Palestine now are unaware of everything we've done. We struggled through the sand, we ploughed the fields with our bare hands. German Jews think they can teach us something but the truth is that they must learn from us, they must always only learn. We have taught those Jews to speak. They were silent, they stammered, but we gave them a voice. They lived without any dignity, but we gave it to them.[119]

Another socialist Russian Jew who had become a Zionist, a nationalist Jew, who Tergit described as the King of Palestine, at least due to his Jewish side, told her "we have a lot to learn from the German Jews, with regard to hygiene and cleanliness, the women are beautiful and well-dressed . . . but they are a danger to the Jewish culture."[120]

Yet Palestine was a country full of contradictions and even here in Eretz Yisrael it could be the case that every Jew was proud of the good relationship he had with his country of origin. At the end of a conversation, each of them, the Russian Jew, the Ukrainian, the Frenchman wanted to argue that his ties with Russia, Ukraine or France were the strongest, the best: "We are a marvellous people!,"[121] commented Tergit. In a short and light-hearted digression, she described how the Jews in Palestine loved a certain kind of cake that was not cheap or big, but nonetheless familiar to them. The German Jews appreciated their cakes and wanted what they were used to, the ones known as "pigs' ears" due to their shape:[122] "It is not a rational thing, it's all about feelings."[123] It's nostalgia, which is born of habit and affection. Zionism cannot make a clean sweep of this, it cannot uproot your attachment to your country of origin. Men love their own streets, the corner where they lived, the land where they were born, the air they breathed, the traditional clothing and dress in their country, and the songs of the people who drove them away. And so the Jews "sing of their homesickness, their love, their happiness against the night sky of Tel Aviv, using the languages, melodies, and customs of the people who drove them away."[124]

A conversation about the weather written in 1935 perhaps summarizes what to the writer represented a simple ideal of life. Tergit was waiting under a dripping canopy with a couple of Russian Jews. They passed the time simply by talking about the weather. "It's raining too much this year," said

the woman. "What a lot of rain!" They sheltered from the rain peaceably. She did not say: "what do you think of Hebrew?" And he did not say: "when I arrived in Palestine you couldn't shelter from the rain under a canopy." They made no claims and they did not blame anyone. They stood in the rain and talked about the weather. A peaceful and friendly conversation about the weather. The rain eased off. "Shalom." And we quickly ran home in the rain.[125] A conversation without conflict and controversy, relaxed, almost fraternal, but without constraints, where no one had to prove anything or had to be right. A conversation that was thus impossible since, as her friend the Zionist Moritz Goldstein from New York reminded her, Israel is a *Gesinnungsland*, land of principles, and you cannot breathe in a *Gesinnungsland*.[126] A moment of grace, light and spontaneous, a daydream. As we know, things did not go like that. The roof she ran to in order to shelter from the rain represented her exile. Just as her friend Olden had prophesized to her in 1935: "You are a figure of the Galut and you know it, and now you will transform even Eretz Yisrael into a Galut."[127]

NOTES

1. Unpublished letter to J. Leftwich, 15 July 1955 (in English), available at Jens Brüning Archiv, Berlin. The Gabriele Tergit bequest is partly kept in the Literary Archive in Marbach, partly by Jens Brüning in Berlin, who recently died, partly at the Deutsche National Bibliothek in Frankfurt and partly, since recently, at the Moses Mendelsohn Zentrum in Potsdam, Germany.

2. Unpublished letter to Reichmann, 2 March 1935, available at Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach/A:Tergit.

3. Unpublished letter to A. Koestler, 17 July 1946, available at DLA Marbach/A:Tergit.

4. Unpublished letter to Franck, 14 March 1972, available at DLA Marbach/A:Tergit.

5. A special mention goes to Jens Brüning, who died recently. He was the curator of the Tergit bequest, which he kindly and generously made available to me in Berlin shortly before his death.

6. "I have written 700 pages on Judaism, on all the Jews in Palestine, on the German Jews, on individual lives." Interview with Hempel, 28 February 1982, available at DLA Marbach/A:Tergit.

7. Unpublished letter to J. Leftwich, 15 July 1955 (in English), available at DLA Marbach/A:Tergit.

8. This second part was published in Germany by Jens Brüning, *G.Tergit, Im Schnellzug nach Haifa*, edited by J. Brüning, afterword by J. Schlör, Transit Buchverlag, 1996, and translated into Italian as *G.Tergit, Sul diretto per Haifa*, edited by J. Brüning, afterword by J. Schlör, edited by P. Severi, ECIG, Genoa, 2000. The first scholar to study Gabriele Tergit in Italy was Monica Lumachi with her degree thesis entitled *Prima viene la morale, poi la porcellana dipinta. Gabriele Tergit: l'esperienza di vita e l'attività di una scrittrice ebraico-tedesca dalla Repubblica di Weimar all'emigrazione,* Degree thesis, University of Florence, Academic year 1992–1993, and subsequently her contribution *Chi stampa mai dinamite? Gabriele Tergit in Palestina (1933–1938)*, in A.A.V.V. *La scuola dell'esilio. Riviste e letteratura della migrazione tedesca*, edited by A. M. Carpi, L. Perrone Capano, Rome, Artemide 2009, pp. 177–194.

9. M. Lumachi, *Chi stampa mai dinamite? Gabriele Tergit in Palestina (1933–1938)*, in A.A.V.V. *La scuola dell'esilio* (2009:178).

10. G. Tergit, *Etwas Seltenes überhaupt, Erinnerungen,* Ullstein, Frankfurt/M; Berlin; Vienna, (1983: p. 134).

11. Tergit, Interview with H. J. Hempel, 28 February 1982, available at DLA Marbach/A:Tergit.
12. On the characteristics of the emigration, or Aliyah [ascent, in Hebrew, migration to the land of Israel], of the German Jews from 1933 see C. Wormann, *Kulturelle Probleme und Aufgaben der Juden aus Deutschland in Israel seit 1933*, in *In Zwei Welten, Siegfred Moses zum fünfundsiebzigsten Geburtstag*, edited by H. Tramer, Verlag Bitaon LTD. Tel Aviv (1962: p. 280–329).
13. "My husband and my brother-in-law are old pre-war Zionists," G. Tergit, Unpublished letter to Grete Hirschberg, 19 December 1959, available at DLA Marbach/A:Tergit.
14. "Judaism has always held great importance to me." Interview with Hempel, 28 February 1982, DLA Marbach/A:Tergit.
15. Cfr. G. Tergit, *Die geistigen Grundlagen Palästinas* (*The spiritual foundations of Palestine*), unpublished manuscript, p. 7, available at Archiv Jens Brüning, Berlin.
16. *Ibid*., p. 9.
17. *Ibid*., p. 13.
18. *Ibid*., pp. 14–15.
19. *Ibid*., p. 15.
20. *Ibidem*.
21. Aliyah (ascent in Hebrew), migration to the land of Israel.
22. G. Tergit, *Die geistigen Grundlagen Palästinas*, p. 16.
23. *Ibidem*
24. *Ibid*., p. 17
25. G. Tergit, *Die Rasse der Juden*, unpublished manuscript, available at DLA Marbach/A:Tergit.
26. G. Tergit, *Legende*, unpublished manuscript, available at DLA Marbach/A:Tergit.
27. G. Tergit, *Die geistigen Grundlagen Palästinas*, p. 21
28. *Ibid*., p. 24.
29. *Ibid.*
30. I. Pappe, *Storia della Palestina moderna. Una terra, due popoli* (2004:134). Monica Lumachi called attention to this in Italy in M. Lumachi, *Chi stampa mai dinamite?* (2009: p. 187).
31. M. Lumachi, *Chi stampa mai dinamite?* (2009: 187).
32. Avraham Ussishkin (1863–1941). Ussishkin was born in Russia and saw the agricultural colonization of Palestine as the first and most important step toward achieving the Jewish State.
33. M. Lumachi, *Chi stampa mai dinamite?* (2009: p. 27).
34. *Ibidem*.
35. See G. Tergit, *Über jüdische Politik*, p. 3, available at DLA Marbach/A:Tergit.
36. G. Tergit, *Die Geistigen Grundlagen Palästinas,* p. 29.
37. *Ibid*., pp. 30–31.
38. *Ibid*., p. 33.
39. *Ibid*., p. 34. Galut: Jewish term describing exile, dispersion.
40. *Ibidem.*
41. *Ibid*, p. 40.
42. *Ibid*., p. 44.
43. *Ibid*, p. 46.
44. *Ibid*., pp. 47–48.
45. *Ibid*., p. 49.
46. *Über jüdische Politik*, pp. 6–7.
47. G. Tergit, *Die geistigen Grundlagen Palästinas*, p. 51.
48. *Ibid*., p. 53.
49. *Ibid*, p. 54.
50. *Ibidem.*
51. G. Tergit, Untitled manuscript written during the war, probably for a lecture, p. 1, available at DLA Marbach/A:Tergit.
52. G. Tergit, *Die geistigen Grundlagen Palästinas*, p. 86.
53. *Ibid*, p. 87.

54. We also see an echo of these opinions in the novel *Effingers*, in which Tergit recounts the lives and destinies of a Jewish family through several generations from 1878 to 1948. One of the characters, Waldemar, son of the patriarch, the banker Markus Goldschmidt, states "We need to support all these persecuted Russian Jews. Zionism is another matter. These people deny us the right to exist in Germany." Waldemar saw it as a matter of "fighting on two fronts: for other members of the same religion who were still backward, and for equal rights for Jews." See G. Tergit, *Effingers*, Lichteberg Verlag, Munich 1964, p. 293.
55. G. Tergit, *Die geistigen Grundlagen Palästinas*, p. 56.
56. *Ibid*, p. 57.
57. *Ibid*., p. 58.
58. *Ibidem*.
59. *Ibid*, p. 62.
60. *Ibid*, p. 63.
61. *Ibid*., p. 69.
62. *Ibid*., p. 70.
63. *Ibid*., p. 73.
64. *Ibid*, pp. 76–77.
65. *Ibid*., p. 78.
66. *Ibid*., p. 79.
67. G. Tergit, *Huberman in Palestina*, unpublished manuscript, p.1, available at DLA Marbach/A:Tergit.
68. *Ibid*., p. 80
69. *Ibid*., p. 83.
70. *Ibid*., p. 85.
71. *Ibid*., p.88.
72. Unpublished letter to Jaeger, 3 December 1974, DLA Marbach/A:Tergit.
73. Unpublished manuscript written during the war, probably the text of a lecture, DLA Marbach/A: Tergit.
74. Unpublished letter to Edelstein and Lichtwiz, Jerusalem-Rehavia, 28 August 1934, available at Jens Brüning Archiv, Berlin.
75. *Ibidem.*
76. In the novel *Effingers*, during a conversation on Zionism between Waldemar and Erwin, the former asserts: "Zionism does not oppose evil but reflects all the arguments of this terrible new world movement (nationalism and racism, author's note). It is fighting on the wrong side. In terms of blood and extreme nationalism, anti-Semitism is legitimate," see G. Tergit, *Effingers*, (1964: p. 293).
77. Unpublished letter to Edelstein and Lichtwiz, Jerusalem-Rehavia, 28 August 1934, available at Jens Brüning Archiv, Berlin.
78. *Ibidem.*
79. *Ibidem.*
80. See. G. Tergit, *Im Schnellzug nach Haifa*, (1996: p. 15).
81. *Ibid*., p. 14
82. *Ibid*., p. 15.
83. *Ibid*., p. 16.
84. *Ibid*, p. 19.
85. *Ibidem*.
86. *Ibid*, p. 20.
87. *Ibid*., pp. 20–21.
88. *Ibid*, p. 21.
89. *Ibid*., p. 25.
90. *Ibid*., p. 45.
91. *Ibid*., p. 39.
92. *Ibid*., p. 37
93. *Ibid*, p. 38.
94. *Ibidem*.
95. *Ibid*, p. 45.

96. Tel Aviv (literally "spring mound" was the Hebrew title that Sokolow gave to Herzl's novel *Altneuland*)
97. G. Tergit, *Im Schnellzug nach Haifa*, (1996: p. 49).
98. *Ibid*, p.64.
99. *Ibid*., p. 128
100. *Ibid*., p. 64.
101. *Ibid*, p. 65.
102. *Ibid*., p.53.
103. *Ibid*, pp. 82–84.
104. *Ibid*., p. 87.
105. *Ibid*., p. 119.
106. *Ibid*, p. 91
107. *Ibid*., p. 92.
108. *Ibid*, pp. 99–101.
109. G. Tergit, *Pessach. I. Samaritaner,* unpublished manuscript, available at Jens Brüning Archiv, Berlin.
110. G. Tergit, *Pessach III.*1934, unpublished manuscript, available at Jens Brüning Archiv, Berlin.
111. G. Tergit, *Pessach IV*, unpublished manuscript, available at Jens Brüning Archiv, Berlin.
112. G. Tergit, *Pessach V,* unpublished manuscript, available at Jens Brüning Archiv, Berlin.
113. G. Tergit, *Im Schnellzug nach Haifa*, (1996: p. 105).
114. *Ibid*., p. 105.
115. *Ibid*, p. 115.
116. The derogatory term *Yekke* probably refers to the jacket, *Yacke*, which the German Jews insisted on wearing even on the beach and at the seaside. They stood out because they did not wear kaftans, the traditional Jewish garment, or clothing that was better suited to the climate. On the subject of Yekke, see Jüdischer Almanach, *Die Jeckes*, edited by G. Dachs, Jüdischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main. 1995.
117. G. Tergit, *Im Schnellzug nach Haifa* (1996: p. 130).
118. *Ibidem*.
119. *Ibid*., p. 139.
120. *Ibid*., p. 143.
121. *Ibid*, p. 107.
122. *Ibid*., p.109.
123. *Ibid*., p. 108.
124. *Ibid*., p. 111.
125. G. Tergit, *Wettergespräch*, unpublished manuscript, available at Jens Brüning Archiv, Berlin.
126. Citation in an unpublished letter to G. Hirschberg, 19 December 1959, DLA Marbach/ A:Tergit,
127. Letter from Rudolf Olden to Tergit, 22 September 1935, Tergits Teilnachlaß, Exil-Archiv, Deutsche National Bibliothek, Frankfurt am Main.

Else Lasker-Schüler in Palestine

Land of the Hebrews or "Ugly Israel?"[1]

"We must speak of Palestine with love. . . . We do not care to speak of it from a scientific or economic viewpoint: Palestine is the land of the Book of God."[2] While Gabriele Tergit's approach to Palestine was, as we have seen, historical, social, economic, and political, Else Lasker-Schüler's approach to the biblical land was deliberately quite different. In addition to her numerous and explicit statements about the country, including the one mentioned above, Schüler's different approach to Palestine is clear from the title of her account *This Hebrew Land*,[3] written after her first stay in the country in 1934. In the holy land, Schüler was indeed seeking the Hebrews, not the Jews, in other words not individual flesh-and-blood Jews or the Jew of the diaspora and of assimilation, the secularized Jew or the Jew in exile, but the pre-exile Hebrew who the poet also saw as the Hebrew of the future. What she hoped to find was a new and ancient collective identity or rather a path toward it. She believed that the role of blazing this trail should fall to the inhabitants of Palestine, who were immersed in an almost ahistorical present without any time distinctions that was simultaneously past, present, and future. The saying: "And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"[4] is significant of the bond and responsibility faced by the Hebrews of Palestine, for whom the duty of the being had to enlighten and guide the being, transfigure what existed, which could not be a repetition of what was already known and experienced. Several of Schüler's passages implicitly and explicitly avow the impossibility of returning to the land of the fathers to live a normal life that one could live anywhere. What the poet expected was, as we shall see, a transformation of the human being and especially the relationship between people, even the relationship between man and the whole of

creation. Last but not least, this aspect means that *This Hebrew Land* can also be read as a utopian Zionist novel and not merely as an account or a travelogue.[5] The fact that these "messianic" expectations were, as we shall see, to be largely disappointed, did not change the nature of those expectations, which remained unchanged until her death in Jerusalem in 1945. These expectations are reminiscent, none too paradoxically, of the expectations secretly nourished by Scholem, who expected Eretz Yisrael to be a *Tikkun* of the soul, or a transformation of the Jewish existence. While it may appear somewhat of a stretch to compare Schüler, who nurtured and propounded an approach to the Jewish question that was not at all bookish and rational, to the student of the Kabbalah and Jewish thought—perhaps in the light of the mutual incomprehension that, as we shall see, characterized the relationship between the pair in Palestine—it is nevertheless a reflection of the climate of utopian expectations and redemption that was common to the German speaking strand of Judaism that reached the height of its crisis during the first two decades of the twentieth century and of which both were exponents and interpreters. This ethical and religious imperative guided the poet in her revelation to the reader of the holy land and Jerusalem—the city that had no equal and was not of this world—and also because Jerusalem and the Bible had long been present in the memory and writings of one of the greatest German language poets of the twentieth century. Partly, but not solely for this reason, she saw her first trip to Palestine in 1934 as a *Heimkehr*, a return.

In *This Hebrew Land,* the past and present of the writer and her people, her home, her childhood, her old and new friends, Bible characters and settlers, and the new Hebrew farmers, who were princes of the land because they were the creators of a new ancient reality, lived alongside one another, while her youthful poems were assimilated and reinterpreted in a structure that was dominated, as Bodenheimer observed, by continuous passages and associations in which nearly every theme is related to its virtual opposite,[6] resulting in a form of writing that is revelation and prophecy, remembrance and memory, truth and abandonment to dreams, in other words an "enchanted truth."[7]

Mein Volk
Der Fels wird morsch
Dem ich entspringe
Und meine Gotteslieder singe . . .
Jäh stürze ich vom Weg
Und riesele ganz in mir
Fernab, allein über Klagegestein
Dem Meer zu.

Hab mich so abgeströmt

Von meines Blutes
Mostvergorenheit.
Und immer, immer noch der Widerhall
In mir,
Wenn schauerlich gen Ost
Das morsche Felsgebein,
Mein Volk,
Zu Gott schreit[8]

My People, written in 1905, re-published in the celebrated volume *Hebrew Ballads* (1913) and subsequently also included in *This Hebrew Land*, ably illustrates Schüler's ambivalent relationship to the Jewish people, her own people. A people whom, it is said, seemed to have lost the solidity and consistency of the rock from which they still continued to rise forth, and now cried out toward the east, toward their origins. The poet's relationship with her people is nevertheless significant: she comes from this crumbling rock and sings God's Psalms. However, this is a lonely path, held within herself, beyond the stones of pain, toward the sea. Even if this path is partly a detour, the tie is not severed, because the echo of the cry that her worn-out people raised to God in despair still lives on in her. A confession of distance but also of belonging, of detachment but also of creative participation. It is also a statement that the path taken is consciously and, perhaps, deliberately lonely despite the reference to her people. This loneliness worsened, as we shall see, during the years of her stay in Jerusalem among her people. It was a loneliness that she suffered rather than sought, to the extent that it no longer appeared to her to be easily mastered or processed and thus was experienced as fear, disorientation, and despair, even as betrayal by her own people.

In an early work, *Sulamith*, published in "Ost und West" in 1901, Shulamite's quest for her beloved led her soul to become lost and then be extinguished, through a juxtaposition of love and death, in the sunset of Jerusalem. Schüler's bond with her people was therefore marked at the outset by love, but also by defeat, loneliness, and death, as we have already seen in *My People*. These images arose from personal, existential matters, from a spontaneous, immediate, and primordial relationship with Judaism that was not at all burdened, as Werner Kraft observed, by the problems[9] experienced by the German-speaking Jewish intelligentsia of her day. From her childhood, her work certainly and indisputably may be said to refer to God, the Bible, and its great characters, first and foremost that of Joseph, the dreamer who was misunderstood and disowned by his brothers and with whom Schüler was to identify throughout her life since, through her poetry, she also felt misunderstood and unloved by her own people. And there was more: just as Joseph had the gift of interpreting dreams, so Schüler, as a poet, also considered herself to be a prophet and a seer. Just as Joseph's interpretations and visions

did not stem from bookish, learned wisdom, her poetry was also a spontaneous, spring-like force, or at least this was how she interpreted it. Joseph, as Bauschinger[10] rightly affirmed, was a figure who could embody the three major constants in Schüler's life and work, as defined by Kraft: family, Judaism—in other words her people—and God.[11]

The collection of poems entitled *Hebrew Ballads*, published in 1913—the title pays homage to Heine, who, along with Goethe, was her favorite poet—bears witness to this intense love for Judaism, not so much the Judaism of her own time but rather the mythical and pre-mythical Judaism of the Bible and of its legendary and great characters. It is also testimony to the honor that she had always bestowed upon the people, the people loved by God, the smallest nation on the Earth.

Even though she loved her people, she railed against those among the Jews of her own time who had become bourgeois, smug, and satisfied: "I detest the Jews, as I have been David or Joseph," she wrote to Martin Buber in April 1914. "I hate the Jews because they despise my language, because their ears are blocked and they heed the words of meanness and jargon. They gobble too much, they should go hungry."[12] She felt misunderstood by the assimilated Jewry of her day, insensitive as it was to the originality and uniqueness of her poetic language, a very personal and evocative form of German, full of images and sounds that vibrated, in her view, with ancient tradition. The Judaism of assimilation instead lent its ear to *mauscheln*, the jargon of eastern Jews who wanted to speak German, jargon that Schüler did not like, as she was to reiterate in Palestine.[13] In the words she addressed to Buber—with whom her relationship was to be anything but simple and straightforward, even in Jerusalem—Schüler distanced herself from materialism, from dancing around the golden calf, as she had already said to Jethro Bithell in 1909: "Like Moses, I am always in the desert and dying of thirst and burning next to the burning bush. And I strangle those people who dance around the golden calf."[14] With these words, Schüler stigmatized the distance from God and the spirit typical of those Jews who devoted themselves to false idols, idolizing money and material and cultural satiety, rather than going hungry and thirsty, that is, seeking other nourishment, that of the soul, which is much more difficult to come by, and thus becoming closer to God, faithful to the source. Instead they preferred to feed on meanness, stuff themselves until they were sated rather than help those who, like her, sang God's Psalms. She was, as we will see, bitterly disappointed to find that, even in the land of holiness, selfishness of the heart and Philistine-ism, in her own words, prevailed over solidarity.

Instead she appreciated the Jews who were not very domesticated, not very smug in a bourgeois sense but rather remembered and sought the greatness that had been and could be and should come back into being: the "*wilden Juden*," which was the category to which she felt she belonged. Jews

who were perhaps irregular, not *kosher*, but with an intelligent heart. These "*wilde Juden*"—as they were readily described by a journal she would have liked to have been published by Karl Kraus,[15] a Viennese intellectual by whom she knew she was appreciated and understood—these "wild Jews" are forerunners of the *Hebräer*,[16] or of the Hebrews, as we call them, Hebrews who were "Pre-mosaic"[17] but also looked to the future. Hebrews who, as we have said, were not individual flesh-and-blood Jews or the isolated and alienated Jews of her time, but "ideal" and natural Hebrews who, as in the past and eternally, referred to the land of Palestine, *Hebräerland*,[18] still lived between the pages of the Bible but were also its present-day farmers who, as she would go on to say, were not looking for gold in Palestine but digging for God.

As early as November 1922, in a letter sent to Hugo Bergmann—who as mentioned previously had settled in Jerusalem in 1920 and whom Schüler had met during a reading of her poems in Prague—she asked what Jerusalem was like and stated: "I will have to come some time."[19] And she went on to wonder whether she would have to speak in Jerusalem. She slowly developed the idea of a trip to Palestine, shifting closer to the city that had always nurtured her poetry, her heart, and her imagination. At the beginning of 1924, she hoped to be invited there by the British and to support herself there with lectures and readings, as she was already doing in Germany.[20] In 1925, her plan of going to Palestine seemed to reach a turning point, but the trip that she had planned with her friends Erwin Loewensohn and Abraham Stenzel for 8 April, in order to attend the opening of the University of Jerusalem did not take place, perhaps for health reasons. While she continued to express her fascination with the East and its legends in her poetry and prose and in her copious parallel artistic output of colored drawings and papers, packed with magic and imagination, gradually taking on the most diverse "masks"—she would always love dressing up and portraying herself as an oriental woman "from her legendary Oriental Princess Tino of Baghdad,"[21] to Jussuf Prince of Thebes—the thing that revealed Palestine to her was the play *Arthur Aronymus*,[22] "as though the time of fantastic forays into distant exotic worlds was irretrievably past."[23] As Virginia Verrienti observed, its publication in 1932 closed "that more than 10-year period during which the poet's rate of production slowed down, partly under the impact of the tragic experience of the illness and death of her son,"[24] Paul. During this period, perhaps for the same reasons, her plan of going to Jerusalem seemed to suffer a setback and then came back into favor with the writing of the play that recalled her to the problem of Jewish destiny due to its close scrutiny of the problem of anti-Semitism. In the play *Arthur Aronymus*, the poet began with her experience of the present, fraught with risks and dealt with her own family history, freely reinterpreted and developed against the backdrop of German Jewish events of the nineteenth century and the Westphalian experience in particu-

lar—Schüler was born in Eberfeld in 1869—a story that was also marked by pogroms and hostility. Although the play ended with a message of reconciliation and Schüler offset the threat represented by the outside world with family love and dialogue between religions, she conjured up the reality of the pogroms and German anti-Semitism and turned it into a theme. This situation led her to develop a more specific need for a trip to Palestine, the land of her fathers—she who was now homeless and without family affection, soon to be deprived even of her country. Events and history interwove and the poet, who had recently been awarded the prestigious Kleist prize in November 1932, was now about to become an outcast:[25] on 19 April 1933, Schüler left Berlin forever and went into exile in Zürich, Switzerland.

"Later on I want to go to Jerusalem,"[26] she wrote from Zürich in April 1933 to Friedrich Andreas Meyer, who had been a friend from her days at the University of Berlin and would emigrate to Palestine the same year, and she reiterated a few days later: "Let's all go to Palestine. . . . Once, when we were young and had fun, we were there, riding camels through the desert."[27] And she extended the invitation to the journalist Hulda Pankok: "Later, in autumn, come with me to Palestine. It must be wonderful there. . . . We all want to act and go over there, a wonderful loving company, the holy land."[28]

And dusting off her broken English, she wrote to Bergmann and the great writer Shmuel Josef Agnon:[29] "Allways I think Palestina."[30] And she was always thinking of the holy land: she thought she would be able to go there with a single suitcase—"I don't think that I need any more than that."[31] "I am going to Palestine. I will sleep on the beach in Jaffa, within it. By day I will collect shells and will put them back inside. I need nothing more."[32] And she reassured Agnon: "I'm coming in September and if I have to cross the Red Sea, the great prophet will help me."[33] She wrote to her friend Elfriede Caro who had recently moved with her daughters to Jerusalem: "Now she is in the holy land, wearing a silver ring around her neck in the evening. Arthur Holitscher always told me: in the evening, over Jerusalem, the only city on earth, there was often a silver reflection. . . . I am coming very soon. I am as happy as David."[34] And to her great friend, Emil Raas, who admired her greatly and also helped her materially, she wrote: "I want to tend the flocks in Palestine, and graze with then in the meadows where the grasses grow tall as people and one can hide among the rustling stalks."[35]

These plans sometimes seemed like flights of fantasy, games, daydreams that caressed and stroked Palestine but did not grasp it. Yet we should not allow this almost playful, sometimes bucolic dimension of her existence to mislead us about the seriousness and drama of the poet's situation now that she was in exile, as evidenced by the sad and melancholy poems of those years. This lightness, this airy dimension of her existence, this apparent underestimation of reality actually arose out of her awareness of the harshness of reality, of loneliness, of the catastrophe looming over the world—a

world that, as she went on to describe in poetry written at the same time as these letters, had become cold and where the cold north wind raged so much that she no longer knew where to go[36]—and they were perhaps an attempt to react, remove, defeat the difficulties or impossibilities of life through overthrow, dreaming, playing, and writing. Her light side and her deep side mingled and intertwined in her poetry, both coexisting alongside one another in the same author to the end of her life, so much so that Jakob Hessing rightly stated that it was difficult, perhaps impossible, to answer the question: who was Else Lasker-Schüler?[37]

One reassuring prospect nevertheless opened up in that cold winter in Zürich, an invitation to spend some time in Egypt received from the literary critic Margrete Pilavachi—who had moved there from Germany with her husband—with the intention of then continuing to Palestine, as she wrote to Elvira Bacharach.[38] The idea was that she would pay for her keep by reading her poems, exhibiting her drawings and those of her beloved son Paul, take part in various meetings, see flattering articles published by Pilavachi about her in many magazines and newspapers. She would be taken by car to the sea.[39] Her desire was thus for care and affection, literary recognition, and escape from her cold Swiss exile. Else Lasker-Schüler arrived in Alexandria by sea on 27 March 1934 but she quickly realized that her friend's promises were destined to remain merely good intentions. Disappointed and bitter, she left Alexandria bound for Jerusalem, which she reached by train and boat through the Suez Canal. She arrived exhausted, a state of mind and body that is often evident in letters of this period. She initially stayed with her friend Elfriede Caro and then became the guest of the Jewish Agency at the Hotel Nordia. As Bauschinger wrote, Schüler certainly did not hold herself back during her nearly two-month stay and from the small hotel conveniently located opposite the post office—almost an emotional landmark to her, as she would go on to recount in *Hebräerland*—she sought to see as much of the Land as possible because it was clear to her from the start that she would write something about it.[40]

To Klaus Mann she wrote: "overwhelming,"[41] referring to her first impact with the land of holiness. And in a letter addressed to Ernst Ginsberg she recounted: "After incredible adventures, I arrived here at the moon's bride.[42] . . . Here: great Land of the Bible, caravans pass unendingly in front of my balcony: completely different from how one imagines it. But difficult. . . . I crossed the Arab quarter to the Wailing Wall. Moving."[43] Her initial impressions of Palestine were very strong and well-defined. Everything seemed shocking, larger-than-life, different from how she had imagined it, but also difficult. The difficulties of life in the Land that typified her stay were partly due to her condition: she was no longer in the first flush of youth and was struggling socially—Schüler knew little or no Hebrew—and she had to deal with the stressful physical adaptation as well. Partly for this

reason, it is believed, her initial involvement and enthusiasm were destined to fade or rather to alternate with moments of despair and depression.[44] After describing a trip to Tel Aviv in the omnibus—a trip which at that time lasted several hours—crossing the desert, and the incredible reality of Tel Aviv and its sea—the element she loved more than anything else—she immediately added: "Everything difficult. Tolerable only for a few weeks. Exhausting."[45] And she wrote on the same day to Friedrich Andreas Meyer of being "upset. I feel so unhappy, 'here' where I felt longing for the Bible."[46] She was unhappy partly because she was unable, as she said, to reconcile her image of the Bible Land with the Palestine where she found herself living. To her great friend, Emil Raas, who would help and support her in every way, always lending a friendly ear, she wrote: "I will soon be leaving,"[47] something she also repeated a few days later.

She told Helene Kann, Karl Kraus's friend, about the huge wilderness of rust-red stone highlands, but also valleys, camels, and Bedouins: "Jews of all types. Incredible. . . . I live in the middle of the city. This city is treeless and not big but variable. I have been to Bethlehem, like in the Bible, I have been in the Garden of Gethsemane, I have been on the road to Emmaus, I have been to Tel Aviv, where in eight days on Friday I will give some lectures at the Habimah theatre. And here in an art salon. . . . The Hassidim enormously close to their origin."[48] The land of holiness is therefore a rocky, barren land with hardly any green and not very welcoming. She nevertheless felt as though she were living in the Bible: "It is one great Bible here. . . . The settlements are a miracle. All rust-red stone, brown sky with a yellow border and purple fringes,"[49] she wrote to Klaus Mann, announcing that she would again be in Zürich after a stay of only three weeks in the Land. And she told her friend Emil Raas that "The strange city of the moon was a dream come true. I can stay here another three weeks. It would be nice if you were here too. I have to come back here in November."[50] She received a warm welcome as the poet who wrote the *Hebrew Ballads* and her reading of the poems was a success, because Schüler's interpretation was very striking: "A wonderful speaker, she intoned the poems all dressed in black between two candelabra, to the accompaniment of the rhythmic shaking of a simple tin box that she used to evoke the sound of caravans."[51] She remarked on this welcome and her success in a letter: "The lecture on my poems here was touching, with all the candles. I will also speak in Haifa," she wrote in May 1934, and added: "The people here really do not want to let me leave."[52] The welcome she received never seemed quite enough to her, however, because she above all needed to love and be loved: as Giuliano Baioni observed, love was her only agenda in life.[53] Promising further prospects of readings and exhibitions of paintings by herself and her son Paul must have made her think about returning, although she complained that the month she had spent was "not good. Very difficult."[54] She nevertheless emphasized to Emil Raas:

"I have to come back here in October."[55] She now began to embark on a pattern of travelling to and from the Land of the Hebrews. This mainly mental movement also marked the years following her first and second stay, in 1937, and was probably the result of her strong ambivalence towards Palestine, a country where she found it impossible to live but that was also impossible for her to leave. She was only able to think about leaving because she was thinking of returning.

"I am the poet . . . Else Lasker-Schüler," she stated somewhat indignantly and with some pride to Arthur Ruppin, who was the person responsible for welcoming German immigrants at the Jewish Agency. "I actually believed that I would be honoured in Palestine, not by mere words. For a quarter of my life," she continued, "I have done nothing but honour the Jews. . . . And now this!? I have to spend it in the land of the Jews?[56] I came and you asked me, 'How much?' I was embarrassed, we were even overheard! . . . now I have to leave. I want to be closer to the poor wounded of Judaism."[57] There must have been some misunderstanding about a previous request for money that Schüler had made to Ruppin that she was now bringing up again, boasting of her credentials as a poet of the Jews and reminding him of the success of her readings in Palestine. She nevertheless concluded that she had to leave so that she could be closer to the Jews who were suffering in Europe. Her trip to Egypt had ended without her receiving anything at all for her work and had not provided her with the money that she had hoped would enable her to live in Palestine without having to beg. The chronic lack of funds that was to be a continuing theme does not reflect any lack of esteem for her by friends or institutions. Schüler was to receive subsidies from the Jews amounting to the salary of a mid-level employee with a family during her final stay in Palestine. She was probably not very good with money: if she had it she spent it and, being a generous person, she also spent it to help others.

She was beset by a sense of alienation and anxiety on the day she was about to leave Palestine and wrote the following to Emil Raas from Haifa: "The sky is purple, the moon is out, everything is enchanted. But I have a great fear."[58] The following day when the ship was off the Greek coast on her sea voyage back to Europe, she confessed: "It is as if I were dead."[59] The umbilical cord with Jerusalem is severed for now.

Once she had returned to Zürich, Schüler began work on her book on Palestine, the legendary Land of the Hebrews, among other projects. She announced it with a certain amount of eagerness to Arthur Ruppin, with whom she had a pending "debt" that she was prepared to pay with what she could offer as a writer: "I must thank you for everything you did for me to enable me to stay in Jerusalem. I am writing about our devout city . . . and I will send it to you when it is printed. You are the great gentleman of Jerusalem."[60] The trials and tribulations of her stay seem to have faded and she mainly remembered the positive aspects which, as we shall see shortly, took

center stage in *This Hebrew Land*. She recounted in a letter of July 1934 to Emil Raas that she was often invited to speak about Palestine, not from an academic or literary viewpoint—she specified—but "as the Bible would have it,"[61] and this was her state of mind when she approached her story. She reiterated her intention to return to Jerusalem in October or November: "One lives very naturally there—on things that one gathers, even oranges. . . . And—in Tel Aviv—we gather shells there."[62] The process of drafting and writing her book on Palestine, "gilding" it, as she would say, was, however, not at all straightforward and simple.[63] It was the outcome of such a difficult struggle with herself that the poet wrote the following in October to Silvain Guggenheim, a Swiss friend who was one of her benefactors and patrons in Switzerland: "The fact that I am unable to write my story on Palestine, which would make the Palestinians happy . . . lies in my boundless bitterness for the way they behaved toward me, I who am the poet of the Hebrews . . . now reduced to the status of a very common beggar. . . . The Jews are such strangers[64] to one another that a Jew cannot open his oppressed heart to another without putting himself in a bad light."[65] She had come to the bitter realization that Palestine was not yet the Land of the Hebrews: solidarity was not a feature of relationships between the Jews, or rather the redemptive potential of the Land was not yet apparent in peoples' interactions. We will return to these painful aspects, which were to be a particular theme of Schüler's final years in Palestine.

At the same time she imagined a different, better return from exile, a return that would open up broad prospects of exhibitions, paintings, and readings and she hoped to take along some friends, evidently to feel less alone. She also urged Buber to go to Palestine where "the magnificent settlers are happy and your name carries huge impact,"[66] yet she hesitated to leave Switzerland. While she confided to Arthur Ruppin that she had gone back because she was restless, she assured him that she would return: "I would like to go and come back always. I would never like to become accustomed to Jerusalem. This longing is: the Messiah."[67] This tells us a lot about Schüler's relationship with Palestine. She knew or rather instinctively perceived that not settling in the Land but instead coming and going as mentioned earlier, would guarantee her the opportunity of *Schwärmen*, in other words of fantasizing and going into raptures, allowing her to have a dream-like relationship of desire with the city of age-old longing, which would save both of them from having to come to terms with harsh reality. This was the romanticized and also messianic perspective that Schüler was striving for.

She was indeed only able to write her *Hebräerland* "as if in a dream."[68] The aim of the story was to reveal and it certainly could not do this using scientific or economic pigeonholes or contenting itself with being mere literature. It could only succeed by seeking to ally itself closely with transcen-

dence, so to speak, and this seems to suggest that Schüler was successful only in her relationship with the Other, which is the nearest thing to transcendence. "One can only offer a faithful account of Palestine," she would go on to say, "by revealing the Land of the Hebrews to an Other."[69] Only in this way could the poet, who was also a seer and a prophet, approach the boundary between the heart of the earth and heaven occupied by the Land of the Hebrews: "Palestine is not only of this world."[70]

The writing of the book as well as its publication in 1937 took longer than expected and this delayed her return to Palestine. Her plans to return were mixed with continuous applications to extend her residence permit in Switzerland, which was initially granted until 31 October 1936. On 8 May 1935, she wrote to the literary critic Marcel Brion to tell him that she had "finished my book on Palestine just yesterday, with 12 illustrations"[71] and added: "If I can, I will go back there in a couple of months."[72] Her bitterness, as already mentioned, as well as her difficulties in transforming and processing her memories drew out the writing process: "No one could understand," she wrote to Silvain Guggenheim on 30 September 1935, "the final stage of a book takes place in a goldsmith's workshop. I have gilded every word and now I am satisfied."[73] In a letter to Bergmann, who she had met again in Jerusalem and now congratulated him on becoming Rector of the University, she reminisced: "I, who as a child went to walk with Joseph in Canaan and who wrote the Hebrew Ballads came very poor and disappointed to the Land," and added: "my book is 200 pages long. I believe I have produced something good and not boring."[74]

"Now it is terrible," she confided to Emil Raas on 4 December 1935, "I have hardly any more longing for Jerusalem—I know, one is disappointed everywhere, and by all men."[75] Yet only a few weeks later she wrote: "In my book on Palestine I wrote, where can a Jew go if not to his own country-home, to the synagogue, now I say where can a Jew go if not to God" and she concluded: "I would like to go to Palestine."[76] Again to Emil Raas, at the end of January 1936, she confessed: "I am very worried about my new book, I do not know if it is a success. I have really fought with it, as I did in Palestine itself."[77] She struggled to find a publisher and remembered the entrepreneur, bibliophile, man of culture, and publisher Salman Schocken who owned a large chain of stores in Germany. He would be able to have the book translated into many other languages from Jerusalem and she asked Agnon to put in a good word for her.[78] "I am always thinking about Jerusalem," she confided to Emil Raas in April 1936 and concluded: "I am really homesick."[79] She had probably heard news of the Great Arab Revolt of 1936 aiming to impose a limit on Jewish immigration and wrote: "I am ashamed not to be there right now."[80] And on 7 July 1936 she wrote from Ascona to a new friend she had met there, Nehemia Cymbalist, who was now living in Palestine: "So we will soon see each other in Jerusalem, which was our loving city of God when we

were tiny."[81] The goal of her longing was the Jerusalem of her childhood, of the Bible that she had been taught about in the classroom when she was still a little girl and still was and always would be to her, "the loving city of God." On 13 October she wrote to Adolf Chajes and Schalom Ben Chorin[82] that in Zürich she was walking along the Jaffa Road "and sitting in the Zion cinema"[83]—Schüler loved going to the cinema, even in Palestine. "Here I no longer see the city of Zürich. . . . Greetings to my dear Rector Hugo Bergmann, my dear Krakauers the architects, the Förders, the Brenners and Jerusalem, the sweet bride of God. . . . Everyone in Palestine is in my book. Thank you for being there. I am coming soon!"[84] While she announced to Emil Raas: "I am allowed to stay until 1 November. By then my new book will have come out and I will take it to Jerusalem myself,"[85] it was not that easy to get back to Palestine because she had to pay a deposit to obtain a visa, which was ultimately paid for her by Silvain Guggenheim. On 8 October she at last told Raas: "Dr. Oprecht is publishing my book."[86] In March 1937, Oprecht brought out *This Hebrew Land*, with eight drawings by the author. "Perhaps," she wrote to Jakob Job, "I have been able to describe what at one time was created."[87] She was torn between longing for her homeland: "I will never forget its beauty, all the beloved woods in Berlin and around Berlin"[88] and her memories of childhood and the home she had lost, as she wrote to her friend Ernst Ginsberg, who was also a native of Westphalia: "I am homesick for our garden and the tower."[89] Else Lasker-Schüler was preparing to leave Switzerland to return to Jerusalem, where she arrived on 15 June 1937. The mood in which she undertook this second trip is ably reflected in a letter to Silvain Guggenheim dated 27 April 1937: "I have worked and worked and I have certainly made a huge contribution with my book. I believe, unless I sin, that God will be surprised that Judaism has not immediately rendered me a great honour. . . . 15 May, I am going to Jerusalem. I have many lectures and my paintings will certainly sell, which will enable me to live for two years without having to tremble, I the poet of *This Hebrew Land*."[90]

This Hebrew Land is difficult to summarize because the writing is dominated by continuous space–time passages and shifts. Much more than a travelogue, it is an account that relives past experiences and memories against the backdrop of a present that is nevertheless in turn imbued with the age-old past and landscape of the Bible and its great characters through a process of continuous interior story-telling. It is a story in which everything is enlightened by what Schüler remembered of the Bible or what she knew, however naïvely, fantastically and unconsciously, and which nevertheless firmly fueled her expectations—ably summarized by the Bible's opening quote: "And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."[91] But the Hebrews of this land were also flesh-and-blood Jews, or rather the inhabitants of a country that was, as we know, central to a slow and very complicated process of construction that if not concerned with nationhood

was certainly concerned with identity, and in the grip of a conflict with the Palestinian Arabs. Schüler was not unaware of the stakes and referred to Herzl, the master who had set the project in motion: "After many centuries, Herzl was the deceased Melech, our ever living and immortal guide Theodor Herzl, who breathed life into the reconstruction of the Land of the Hebrews on the papyrus of his faithful heart."[92] But she reminds her readers, while moving to another plane, that of revelation, since she specifically saw Palestine as a land of holiness, the land of the Bible: "All Palestine is revelation."[93] "Here in Palestine," she wrote, "I have lived in three worlds: I was surrounded by sweet memories of Europe, a world that had become mine and that I loved, with my heart and soul in the world of Palestine, which is not of this world and touches the world beyond. The most compelling logic proves very little when compared to revelation."[94] The drafting of the final text as we see it today is the result of damping down the conflicts and problems with a view to this higher revelation of holiness, which required her to reconcile the conflicts and contradictions. This applied to the conflict between Arabs and Jews, between Jews from the most diverse parts of the globe and even between western Jews and eastern Jews. Here even Yiddish, "the jargon dear to Eastern Jews is toned down together with their tormented and persecuted souls"[95]—because "everyone goes to meet the future with a sense of responsibility. It is not fitting to sow discord here in the holy land."[96] Schlenstedt[97] observed that the process of "gilding" that made this result possible may be discerned from a careful reading of the various draftings of the text, which show how Schüler progressively expunged or stylized passages that would have revealed, for example, the conflict between Arabs and Jews and also her own negative reactions to the Land, observations that would have taken her to a level that she did not wish to make her own. She said of Palestine: "We do not care to speak of it from a scientific or economic viewpoint: Palestine is the land of the Book of God and Jerusalem is the veiled bride of God."[98] The thing that was important to her was to recount not so much what she had seen or what she had apparently been shown, but what she would have wished and needed to see: "Everyone in Palestine is eventually able to treat others humanely. Love your neighbour with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength, almost as strongly as you love God."[99] She was therefore not interested in talking about the Palestine of history, of which she had a different experience, as we know from her letters, but the legendary Land of the Hebrews; not what was but what should have been, according to a task and a mandate, a bond and a responsibility, in such a way that the relationships between people were inspired and guided by the quote that preceded her account, which Schüler saw as the justification for Herzl's entire design. "The soul of the Jews [*Juden*] gasps, bent by the burden of choice, persecuted by brother nations. Faith in justice is extinguished in the heart of certain Jews [*Juden*]. Hebrews [*Hebräer*], who are aware of the

content of the divine burden, holding in their arms the burden of responsibility, the holy son of the commandments . . . the Torah with a smile."[100] If there is no redemptive potential in the land of the Hebrews, what is everything for? If the relationships between men and the relationships between men and all of creation do not change, what is the point? "Ah, if all hearts poured into one another! The world and its creatures would return to their splendour and we would see the slow resurgence of—Paradise."[101]

Just as relationships between people in Palestine must be dictated by love, which is the path to redemption, so mankind must love all creatures, all of creation, the moon, and the stars—of which she often spoke with affection and familiarity—but especially animals. The animal Messiah, as Schüler has been rightly described,[102] felt pain at seeing donkeys mistreated on the streets of Jerusalem, choking under the weight of stones, exhausted, without food or water—we will return to this subject—and, moved by compassion, she intervened to defend them by tackling their owners or more often the street children: "A donkey, I explain in English to the listening Effendi, is a person like us."[103] Palestine is, or should be, the return or restoration of Paradise on earth: "How can I make it clear that from birth we are in Paradise, from our first day of life. . . . Paradise is everywhere. God alone created Paradise, which is obscured by lack of love."[104]

Only by showing love, with all its redemptive potential or, in other words, only by bordering on the beyond, and not being entirely of this world was the land of the Hebrews entitled to exist because, as Schüler explicitly stated—and in this she was probably unknowingly more in agreement with Herzl than with spiritual Zionism—Palestine is neither a shelter nor a kindergarten where the still-persecuted Jews must find refuge, but the land of choice, of redemption. "Jerusalem is not merely a refuge," she wrote, "Jerusalem is a single great temple that, first of all the Jews and then every creature must honour with devotion and love wholeheartedly, with all their souls and with all their strength."[105]

Palestine is a land that "cannot be compared with any other land"[106] because "you can understand it even without words."[107] No language problem, no allusion to the intolerance shown for German, hence no problem for the German-speaking poet who knew little Hebrew and what she did know was a memory from her childhood: "Hebrew is spoken in Palestine. Hebrew is the venerable and ever-burgeoning plant of the promised Land,"[108] and also: "The language of the Hebrews returns to its original land."[109] In this too, Else Lasker-Schüler again seems to have had a very different attitude to other exponents of German culture in Palestine. The issue of Hebrew that others found to be crucial, a matter that, as we know, concerned the secularization of the holy language as well as its forced imposition at the expense of German or other languages, did not apparently have any impact on her and she did not mention that even in her letters. It could perhaps be said, wryly,

that this was because she never even considered the issue, sealed off in her world as though in a dream proofed against reality. And there may be some truth in this suggestion. Yet there is more. The fact that she believed that her *Hebrew Ballads* already written in Hebrew denoted a different linguistic sensibility, revealed greater attention to the beyond, the before, and the interior, because she valued the brief, or the origin, intent, and spirit of the writing over the actual letters. Politzer described her attempt to write Hebrew poetry in German as *hebräisch*.[110] In any case, Schüler never complained—even though she was prone to depression—about the relatively low circulation of her poems in Palestine, nor aspired to go beyond her tight circle of influence in Jerusalem, all within the German-speaking culture.[111]

As far as the conflict between Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem was concerned, the dynamics were not between individual people but between peoples,[112] fraternization or at least a will to fraternize. Bauschinger observed that she had arrived in Palestine at a time when Arab nationalism had strengthened to the point of forming terrorist groups that struck out initially at the British mandatory power but also against the Jewish inhabitants after 1929 and the Hebron massacre—which Schüler described as something completely different.[113] She mentioned the danger in which the Jewish settlers lived, exposed "to nightly attacks by the mountain Arabs"[114] only to mention in the same breath the Arab laden with gifts donated by the generous Hebrew settlers with "tears in his eyes as he leaves the hospitable settlement of his Hebrew brothers."[115] Both Arabs and Hebrews were enthusiastic about the Habimah, the theater, and the circus, places of community that Schüler believed to be the bearers of reconciliation, as we shall see later. The return to the Earth of the Bible was now therefore a meeting that transfigured both Arabs and Hebrews, a meeting with an ancestral self in which Arabs were not the Other, but at one with the Hebrews, all part of the same original former state.[116] The drawings that illustrate the book also describe this life in harmony. On the complex and conflicting question of Jewish immigration, she wrote: "Immigration in the land of lands benefits the willing, hard-working Arabs as much as it does the Hebrew workers."[117]

"In the promised Land, all peoples and their faiths live in peace and without concern for the peace of their brothers."[118] And the British? "British soldiers," wrote Schüler, "are gentlemen, and so are British policemen. They respect the Hebrew's love for his Land."[119]

Schüler saw the ancient–new legendary figures, the princes of this land, as pioneers: "They do not dig for gold but to seek God."[120] Every materialistic impulse is expunged in Palestine because "humility, sobriety and generosity"[121] are the three characteristics of Jerusalem. "It is unseemly to surround yourself with comforts in the Holy Land!"[122] For this reason too, Schüler gave the following answer when asked what Palestine was like: "It is different than any other land. Yet it is like the Star of Bethlehem."[123]

"So how happy I was in the holy land!"[124] exclaimed Schüler, talking about her new friends or rediscovered friends, such as Hugo Bergmann, into whose house on the Rambanstrasse in the legendary Rehavia colony—from where, with little courage, you could reach out and touch the moon[125]—she was welcomed on Shabbat eve. A different feeling is evident from her account of her meeting with Scholem, where she turned up as an unwanted guest, because his home was next door to and the twin of Bergmann's home. Scholem sought to dismantle the sacred legends of Israel, so dear to the heart of Schüler, with the poison of logic. An impossible dialogue characterized by two antithetical approaches to Judaism, Scholem's scientific and Schüler's imaginative, spontaneous, and fantastic: a lost opportunity for both, a relationship that left much to be desired and would become increasingly difficult with time.[126] Paradoxically, though, their expectations—as mentioned previously—were closer than either could have imagined, perhaps both were interested in the Kabbalah, which Scholem believed to be the subject of *Wissenschaft* and Schüler saw as the source of poetic inspiration. Schüler then went on to describe her encounters with other charismatic figures of the Ashkenazy community in Palestine, namely the legendary Rabbi Kook, or Shmuel Josef Agnon, the writer who would go on to describe with humor and fine irony the community of German intellectuals in Palestine in the 1930s in his novel *Shira*. For those who wish to learn more about this matter, this is worth reading with equal or even greater attention than an essay or study.

Schüler met many personalities in the land of the Hebrews, from Dr. Ticho, the celebrated ophthalmologist who welcomed her in his garden—a garden that was to provide one of the settings for the play she wrote during her third and final stay, *IchundIch*—the architect Krakauer and his painter wife, the educator Siegfried Lehmann, the writer Ben Gavriel, the painter of the face of eastern Jews Hermann Struck, the writer Josef Kastein, Jehuda Magnes, then Rector of the University, the writer Arnold Zweig and the poet Uri Zwi Greenberg. Arthur Ruppin was a particular favourite because he made her feel acknowledged and comforted by saying that by writing the *Hebrew Ballads* she had contributed to the construction of Palestine thus participating in the work of God.[127]

The "last pilgrim"[128] visited many biblical places, where she was "only on the sidelines,"[129] because she did not belong to any community except for the people of God. Her wonder and admiration for Tel Aviv were great, although there "the sounds of David's Harp are not heard."[130] In Tel Aviv "the commendable organisational skills of the Hebrews were magnificent":[131] the poet issued a warning about the industriousness and defiant will to live of the teeming city "where everyone is Hebrew":[132] "Take great care that the greatest and most beautiful of the cities of the sea, Tel Aviv, does not become worldly. Because Palestine is the land from which all other lands originated. The Creator created all the other lands in its image."[133] The

centerpiece of her stay was Jerusalem, from which everything left only to return because "the Lord's heart is Jerusalem."[134] And though she described it as a fortress in the sky that rose from the surrounding desert sand,[135] this "enchanted truth" was a tribute, Kaiser observed, to the story of the salvation of the Jewish people who came out of Egypt and wandered in the desert for forty years.[136]

"I am Jewish (*Hebräerin*) by the will of God and not by the will of the Hebrews, and I still love its people, the smallest of the nations, as much as God himself. I love my people and the sediment they leave in the glass does not distress me: do I not drink wine from the land of the Hebrews without being bothered by the cloudy residue that settles at the bottom of the glass?"[137]

When leaving the Land before she sailed off on board the *Jerusalem*: "Suddenly I did not know what to do: did I really have to leave this enchanted land, or not?"[138] *This Hebrew Land*, Else Lasker-Schüler's "holy book" ended with tears in her eyes and the firm intention to go back soon.[139]

With her book in her suitcase, on 15 June 1937, Schüler set sail to Haifa from Trieste on the "Galilea" and arrived after a pleasant voyage: "Everyone is wonderful with me."[140] On board the "Galilea," she was able to tell a couple of helpful and friendly passengers, a doctor from Haifa and his wife, about the visions that had disturbed her since she was a child, particularly the entertaining vision of King David she had in Berlin in 1932. The doctor paid attention to her visions: "Only a poet or poetess," he reassured her, "can delve deeply into earthly life . . . in their poetry."[141] Here, on board the "Galilea" she found the benevolent and higher understanding that she had found in Berlin from the famous Max Dessoir, professor of psychology. The same understanding had been denied her by both Scholem and Buber, who were not at all inclined to relate poetry to prophecy, reality, and imagination, at least in this case.

Else Lasker-Schüler thus arrived in Palestine for a second visit more certain than ever that the poet of the Hebrews and their land would now have an easier life. Unfortunately her beliefs proved to be illusions on this occasion too. As Bauschinger reported, her second trip to Palestine was also ill-starred.[142] Her book, released in April, was greeted with condescension: Erich Gottgetreu read it as a fantastic book, though full of abstruse ideas, Ben Chorin reacted by sending a letter to the poet, telling her about his dream after reading it.[143] No longer young—she was now 68—and sorely tried by the four years spent in exile, she suffered from the great heat during the trip, her face was covered with insect bites, and she had several attacks of dysentery.[144] Palestine was also no longer the country she had left three years earlier: 1936 saw the beginning of the great Arab revolt that sought to slow down Jewish immigration, which continued until 1939. Schüler therefore had to deal with a land that was riven by continuous rioting, unrest, and uprisings.

Her movements were therefore reduced to a minimum compared to three years earlier, partly because of her fatigue, partly because of the heat, and partly because she was often ill.

She went to Haifa to read some of her poems, she made a trip to Tiberius one day, she went to the Dead Sea and saw Jericho from a distance. Overall, however, she felt neglected and alone: "I am very sad," she wrote to Bergmann, "we are immigrants and you were always so friendly before."[145] She could not find solidarity. She had imagined a warm welcome and this was not the case. Instead she had to come to terms with illness, loneliness, and indifference. "I am desperate," she wrote to Jacob Zucker on 18 July, "and I am also ill all the time."[146] During the same period, she confided to her grandchildren Edda and Erika Lindwurm, who had remained in Germany: "I will soon leave because my exhausted . . . and starving body cannot stand the heat."[147] She wrote to Hermann Struck, whom she had seen again in Haifa: "I find the inhabitants of Haifa much, much more human . . . than the people from here. Strange, because this is Jerusalem itself."[148] And she confessed to Jacob Zucker: "I hurt all over,"[149] and she told him that she wanted to do something for the poor donkeys who were so overloaded: "The vets say they suffer from cramps caused by choking."[150] She identified with those who suffered and pitied beings who were as maltreated as herself. She wrote to Schalom Ben Chorin: "I am desperate,"[151] and to Hermann Struck: "I have been sick in my body and soul."[152]

She begged the Swiss federal councilor, Albert Meyer, to help her go back to Switzerland, where she wanted to write her book *Tiberias*.[153] This was her planned second book on Palestine, which never saw the light and of which only a few fragments remain. Some of these were published by Schüler in her lifetime, as we will discuss later, while a full edition of her play *IchundIch*, which was supposed to have constituted its central core, was published posthumously only in 1970.[154] Her second stay never really got off the ground. It was not like the first trip with its alternating light and shade but instead was dominated by physical and mental fatigue, disillusionment, and illness: "Yesterday I arrived back home shattered again," she wrote to Ben Chorin on 1 August, and concluded: "I find the existence too hard, the load is too heavy."[155] "I'm so unhappy," she repeated to her friend Cymbalist, "I arrived here exhausted. The heat is incredible. The Land is incomparable, even though you do not see anyone. David may arrive." She was referring to King David, the poet of the Psalms, who began to take shape as the Bible character with whom she now most identified, her ideal friend who could protect her and in whom she could find comfort, perhaps even more than in Joseph.[156] "All the Jews who could help are long gone. My life is that of a beggar."[157] She complained to Agnon that she had "suffered inconsolably here. Only the Krakauers looked after me."[158] She also confided to her friend Cymbalist in a letter of 20 August written a few days before leaving Jerusa-

lem: "I have to be in Zurich. . . . Like this I am stateless inside and outside. I cannot now lose Switzerland as well. I cannot cope any more . . . because to me our holy land is a distillate. Too, too difficult for anyone who has a heart. . . . Or 'yours' should be even stronger than mine. I also love the skies of other lands that are also holy by nature, but that do not believe that the prince-settlers are saints, as they do here."[159] This is a letter of bitter farewell from someone who no longer felt a sense of belonging and was aware of now being rootless wherever she was. She felt regret for a country that had shown itself prepared to sanctify settlers but not poets. It was with this desolate frame of mind that Schüler left Palestine on 25 August.

When she was back in Switzerland, in Zürich, Else Lasker-Schüler was faced with ongoing difficulties: the Swiss authorities were willing to grant her a permit to stay, but only for short periods and on the condition that she would soon leave Switzerland to go back to Palestine. In these precarious conditions that were also marked by a chronic lack of money remedied only by the generosity of friends and Jewish institutions, her enthusiasm faded and her literary projects stalled. She would have liked to work in peace on her second book on Palestine, which could have been entitled *Tiberias*, or *Jerusalem*, or even *The Holy City.* But the writing did not come. She published an article entitled *I'll tell you something about Palestine* on this subject in the November edition of "Jüdische Rundschau,"[160] which takes us back to the atmosphere of *This Hebrew Land.*

"After travelling to the Holy Land, only one journey remains: the journey to heaven."[161] One could not go beyond the pinnacle of Jerusalem, "from there a path leads directly to heaven."[162] And she reiterated that "Palestine is stone, the stone of creation, the most precious stone of the Lord."[163] She had already evoked this image of the stone several times with reference to Jerusalem and its people, as we will see later. "Methodical chaos," Palestine, hard-working and transfigured by the sun.[164] Full of bright and vibrant colours, this holy red soil. During her trip to the Dead Sea, which she embarked on "full of expectation,"[165] Schüler met travelers who were actually remnants of the Bible. The poet told of a biblical landscape, where camels adorned with beads inhabited an eternal desert.[166] Tiberius, the biblical city, had not changed at all: "The same fisherman were fishing in the Sea of Galilee, casting their nets as in the days of the New Testament. I thought I recognised Philip among them."[167] Even though she was only able to see Nazareth from afar, waiting for "peace to be restored"[168] for a closer visit, she discovered "colours I had never seen before carpeting the holy mountains. Blessed is the Land that has such colours."[169] In her account, difficulties, heat, fatigue, and the Arab uprising therefore faded into the background and a renewed enthusiasm and love for this extraordinary biblical land emerged. She wrote to Hermann Struck at around the same time: "I become emotional when I think of Palestine. . . . I cannot wait. . . . I may go there again on an Italian

steamship at Easter,"[170] and to her friend Emil Raas: "I would like to be back in Jerusalem."[171] We are reminded of her words, quoted above, about her being stateless, both internally and externally. Apart from that, she had already admitted, her relationship with Palestine needed and fed on longing, in other words from being far away. It seems that only in this suspended dimension, no longer and not yet there, was it possible for her to experience a positive relationship with the holy land, and to live and make plans concerning it. She emphasized to Emil Raas: "My longing: again Jerusalem."[172] She told him that there she had people dear to her, even as she had in Switzerland, except that here "it is as though they have become spoiled. But there they are stronger."[173] On 2 February she wrote to Cymbalist: "I am always thinking about Palestine and I will come soon."[174] Yet once she arrived there, she also thought about her imminent return to Zurich, as she wrote to Emil Raas on 24 February 1938: "At the end of summer . . . I will travel from Jerusalem to Ascona."[175] Her plans to travel to Jerusalem for Easter and then possibly return to Switzerland the same summer were not prompted only by the objective need to leave Switzerland if her residence permit was not renewed. She was spurred on by her need to look forward to a project, the need to feel alive, to experience strong feelings, such as longing, which fed this continuous mental coming and going in her head, which took precedence over the physical side. The loneliness by which she felt surrounded—loneliness that was certainly linked to her situation of exile but also and above all an internal condition—also, more sadly, always made her look for potential friendships elsewhere. While she did not go to Palestine for Easter, she continued to write to her friends that she would go there soon, that she felt longing, then she cited practical reasons, jobs and duties that would not allow her the time to leave and return to Switzerland. "There are only loved ones in Jerusalem," she wrote to Emil Raas, but added: "I am scared of the world."[176] She wrote to Silvain Guggenheim that she could not stay in Switzerland any longer and "give up on Jerusalem, our holy city. I promised God."[177] And again to Raas on 12 December 1938: "I have had good days in Jerusalem, and now also bad days: I have nothing to lose, but Switzerland does not know *who* is staying behind its mountainous doors. I am broken by my inner solitude."[178] In September 1938, her German citizenship was revoked and her statelessness was now an objective reality. Not only that, but Switzerland was increasingly reluctant to grant extensions to her residence permit; she could stay there, but only until 15 February 1939. Now devoid of any "ubi consistam"—even though in psychological terms this condition dated back to the end of her childhood years, her "*Heimatjahre*," as she defined them[179]—returning to Jerusalem was the only opportunity that now lay ahead: "This time I will come and I have enough to support myself, so that people will not be cool when they come into contact with me," she wrote to Esther Agnon on 26 January 1939 from Zürich: "I am writing a second book on Palestine. And it

will be a fine one."[180] At the same time, she was aware that she could meet a violent death in Palestine because of the situation, as she stated in her last talk given in Zürich on 15 March 1939, shortly before emigrating, before an audience of friends and admirers, among whom the poet recognized Margarete Susman, a thinker and philosopher, who was also exiled in Zurich. In this talk, full of pathos, Schüler recalled the persecution of her people, a people who were now "setting out every day in greater numbers bound for our age-old land."[181] At that moment Schüler felt more than ever part of her persecuted people: "I will soon go by sea for the third time . . . to the promised Land. . . . The third time, I will surrender myself to a higher will. . . . Perhaps chosen to die, to leave my life in God's Sanctuary."[182] On 27 March, she set off for Marseilles, from where she embarked for Palestine. She had to share her cabin with five other women and her already precarious health worsened.[183] On 4 April 1939 Schüler arrived in Tel Aviv exhausted.

"I had to come away for three months," she wrote on arrival to her granddaughter Edda Lindwurm-Lindner, "I will stay for a few months."[184] She therefore had no intention of staying for long, even this time, and Palestine seems to have been no more than a stopping-off point, perhaps the best available, because it was no longer possible for her to stay in Switzerland. A few days later she wrote: "I'm still ill. The fatigue . . . is almost making me blind."[185] "Jerusalem, the inexplicable city . . . is even more marvellous," she wrote to Emil Raas during the same period. These were the alternating, contradictory, swinging moods that are now familiar to us. The coming and going, now only mental, without which it seems she could not live. It was the outcome or symptom of the interior and exterior statelessness that she had admitted. For her, as she would say, only the Messiah could be her homeland: "I believe, my homeland is the Messiah."[186] "The people are all courageous,"[187] she continued in her letter. This was a clear reference to the dangers to which the inhabitants of the Land were exposed, and the continued turmoil afflicting Palestine. Even though the great Arab revolt had come to an end, the Anglo-Jewish-Arab conference held in London in February 1939 and the subsequent White Paper upheld most of the Arab demands, putting a limit on the sale of land to Jews and also to Jewish immigration.[188] "I did not see many farmers in Jerusalem during the recent days of demonstration. What do they care about the White Paper, about the no or yes of the dictatorial world. They are cared for by the highest will of the Lord, who, unseen, sows and reaps with them. This faith extends to the entire Jewish people, educates the soul and makes us strong,"[189] she wrote significantly, after she had seen and probably taken part in the Jewish demonstrations against the British decisions in the streets of Jerusalem.[190] "The situation here, this terrible condition occupies mind, heart (and 'kidneys') King David would have said[191] . . . . If only I could help!"[192] Yet this situation did not prevent her from writing the following to Grete and Leo Kestenberg, orga-

nizer of the Palestine Symphonic Orchestra: "In Jerusalem, the people flock to Misrael,"[193] an ugly Israel. They cannot feel at home, they cannot and do not want to feel at home, because they do not see inhabitants worthy of the holy land around them. Indeed, as she wrote to Paul Goldscheider: "It is difficult here!"[194] In July, she reiterated her intention to leave: "Soon I will leave,"[195] she wrote to Kestenberg. To heal the terrible situation that had arisen between the Arabs and Jews, she had a plan, that only at first sight seemed childish or naive: to open a small amusement park with rides in Rehavia: "A dear, pure thing. God could come and rejoice with the children, large and small. In this way . . . we can reconcile the people of Judah and the Arabs," she wrote to Schocken, now her protector and benefactor in Jerusalem, who helped her and gave her a sum of money every month from 1940.[196] This project was dear to her, as she would emphasize repeatedly, and was based on an underlying idea of reconciliation through play and entertainment in a place of community, such as an amusement park where—as in the theater, the circus, or the cinema—another language comes into play, a language harking back to the brotherhood of childhood, but enacted by adults and children, a language in which all men of goodwill find themselves reflected: "I operate a carousel with popular songs of Jewish and Arab children."[197] Her somewhat realist view was that the conflict had finished in a kind of dead-end and that there was no way out except through a creative, poetic random act that would wrong-foot the parties involved, disarming them without them realizing it. A project that could rouse her from her inactivity: "It is torture for me to sit here with my arms folded. . . . what do you say? If I do not fly away, what am I doing here?"[198] She wanted to be off—she wrote the following to Ben Chorin at the end of July: "I am leaving on the 16th (of August). I am shattered"[199]—but at the same time she wished to make sure it would be possible to return.[200] Her plan for the construction of an amusement park with rides that she had described to Schocken should not suggest that she underestimated the actual situation. On the contrary: "We are at war," she wrote to Emil Raas on 13 August, "at war with eternal and alien brothers."[201] She begged him to intercede so that she could soon be granted a visa for Switzerland. "The children, the parents and the stones burn with pain. . . . I am still glad to be back in Jerusalem, between the Earth, Moon and loyalty to heaven, between life and death. We are not afraid of a bullet or a knife."[202] Yet she admitted to Silvain Guggenheim: "I have reached the end of my tether."[203] She confided in Emil Raas that she became depressed every time darkness fell: "Here it is already dark at 7 o'clock. It is another world here. It is too dangerous to come here alone now. You never know whether you will be able to get back home. But everything is fate. Talpioth, Jerusalem are still as they were in the Bible. You would be speechless. Asia is difficult to stand for very long, like a heavy wine, and yet I keep on coming back,"[204] and she concluded: "Everything, everything is different

here—Jerusalem, the city of God, is a huge mummy. A dead Land that is resurrected in many places."[205] The Swiss authorities refused to grant her an entry visa, but she tried to persuade her friends to intercede to break the deadlock: "I am really desperate," she wrote to Emil Raas on 8 September 1939, "if I get a visa, I can leave. . . . The Land here is magnificent. The language spoken by those who know it: infinite! I think that in spite of or because of this very reason, because of this great holiness, a real person firstly suffers."[206] Schüler may have been trying to say that she suffered because she was not a match for the holiness of the Land, but also because she did not see this holiness everywhere. Not only that: she suffered because holiness is a responsibility, a bond, and an obligation.

With the outbreak of World War II, her plans to leave Palestine were bound to founder, while her disappointment and loneliness increased in a land that she now perceived more than ever as an imposition,[207] to the extent that her fragile psychological and physical balance showed progressive signs of giving way. On 3 December 1939, she wrote to Emil Raas: "Maybe I have lost my Jerusalem . . . I am sorry, I have lost my faith."[208] And she wrote to Salman Schocken: "I imagined that being in Jerusalem would be different. I am deeply disappointed. To tell the truth, the Land has remained the same: original Earth, creation, but I am sinking into myself and dying of sadness. . . . I am so deeply disappointed. Even if you engage with a person, there is no trace of blood uniting you. Away, here, away away away . . . There is no warmth here that goes from house to house, no house fraternises with any another. . . . I have written a good book about Jerusalem and I have become more and more foreign. At the bottom of my heart, I have not really had anyone to comfort me, everyone is actually alien to me."[209] The thing that hurt her the most was the lack of solidarity, the indifference, and the lack of love. She, who had imagined that the land of the Hebrews would mark a change in relationships between people, was forced to admit: "No one here believes anyone else, it is all believed to be calculation and diplomacy."[210] This was the disappointment of one who expected too much, who believed human beings were capable of goodness, solidarity, passion, and selflessness, because she projected her ideals onto them, without realizing human limitations and the continuous barriers that are erected between man and his need for salvation and redemption. She could still be consoled by the land of the Bible, it is true, but not by its inhabitants. She sent missives that were sometimes short to the few friends who still surrounded her with affection. These were actually cries for help that sound like dramatic ultimatums but were ultimately simple requests to participate, not to feel alone with her solitude, with her sadness and the diseases that did not seem to want to spare her. She was now ageing and did not want to admit it: her age was a taboo subject and when cornered, she always knocked a few years off her age when providing personal details. "I am 1001 but also 20,"[211] she declared indignantly to

Adolf Chajes and Schalom Ben Chorin, who dedicated a poem to her for her sixtieth birthday, thus revealing the poet's age.[212] The irony was that she knew she was no longer young but she still felt young: the loss of her strength and her illnesses coexisted with sudden outbursts and enthusiasms, with an intact freshness of mind, with an inexhaustible ability for love and desire, with a creativity and poetic strength that she knew how to use to foil life's adversities and hardships, even if only momentarily.[213] Something different and unexpected seems to have opened up new perspectives for her: her encounter with the philosopher and educator Ernst Simon.[214] I have the firm conviction, after so many years, that "I have seen a man at last,"[215] she wrote to him on 9 November 1940, very probably after meeting him at the Emet we' Emuna synagogue. The rabbi of this synagogue, Dr Kurt Wilhelm, was a liberal and far-sighted man who was a friend and admirer of the poet. This meant that during this last stage of her life the synagogue became for Schüler one of the few places of community where she could cease her wanderings and feel at home, a point of reference for her affections. She told Simon, who was friends with Scholem, about her unfortunate meeting with the latter: "Most people here strike a chill into me," she wrote to him and started to ask him and herself a question that she began to find increasingly pressing, given the lack of love and solidarity by which she felt surrounded: "Where is David, where is Jonathan"?[216] These two characters from the Bible were joined by a deep relationship of friendship and love and had inspired Schüler to write two great poems in the past:

In der Bibel stehn wir geschrieben
Blutumschlungen.

Aber unsere Knabenspiele
Leben weiter im Stern.

Ich bin David
Du mein Spielgefährte.

O, wir färbten
Unsere weissen Widderherzen rot!

Wie die Knospen an den Liebespsalmen
Unter Feiertagshimmel.

Deine Abschiedsaugen aber-
Immer nimmst du still im Kusse Abschied.

Und was soll dein Herz

Noch ohne meines-

Deine Süssnacht
Ohne meine Lieder.[217]

O Jonathan, ich blasse hin in deinem Schoss,
Mein Herz fällt feierlich in dunklen Falten;
In meiner Schläfe pflege du den Mond,
Des Sternes Gold sollst du erhalten.
Du bist mein Himmel mein, du Liebgenoss.

Ich hab so säumerisch die kühle Welt
Fern immer nur im Bach geschaut . . .
Doch nun, da sie aus meinem Auge fällt,
Von deiner Liebe aufgetaut . . .
O Jonathan, nimm du die königliche Träne,
Sie schimmert weich und reich wie eine Braut,

O Jonathan, du Blut der süssen Feige,
Duftendes Gehang an meinem Zweige,
Du Ring in meiner Lippe Haut.[218]

What do David and Jonathan stand for? For Schüler, we believe that they represented the paradigm of human existence and thus also Jewish existence. Love is written in the Bible, love that transcends gender, a love that melts "the cold world," blood as a compelling force, friendship, play, companionship, and songs, all the things she missed now that she was in Jerusalem: "Has it always been like that?" she asked Simon: "I wrote the *Hebrew Ballads* for Europe? . . . I am homesick for my friends in Europe. David and Jonathan were closer to me there."[219] "I am like water that cannot find the beach,"[220] she confessed to her new friend. She turned to him because he helped her to live, he infused her with courage, all the more so because even people who could have been closer to her, such as Buber, had recently disappointed her. Whether rightly or wrongly, she felt misunderstood, or unfairly attacked by Buber, as evidenced by a letter she had recently sent to him: "Dear Professor Buber, I do not think that Jerusalem is the right place for boxing matches or unfair attacks."[221] While she had high points and low points with Buber—a few months later she made it up with him, thanking him for praising her poetry[222] only to sever all relations with him later[223]—with Scholem there was a mutual, lasting antipathy, which dated back to their first meeting and only became worse. "I cannot bear him!!!," she unburdened herself to Simon, "a clown who is not funny. He is not serious, but staid. I would like to punch him, or I wanted to do that then, when I left his

house."[224] Still on the subject of Scholem, a few months later she repeated to Simon: "I cannot stand him. . . . A petrified face. . . . A frozen face. . . . I felt pity, I thought things could not have been easy for him as a child."[225] Her relationship with Simon, which developed through a correspondence at the highest level, was also conflicted and not without misunderstandings and disappointments. Simon was a much younger man with family responsibilities, and yet he was able to rise to Schüler's level, meeting her demands for love with a spiritual relationship of friendship full of tact and respect for the poet, who projected all her love onto him as well as all her desperate needs to be loved. "In you, heart and skin are one," she wrote to him, "this makes you great and your life today so difficult."[226] This was an unbalanced but vital relationship in the sense that, as she said, it helped her to live by the mere fact of being able to love from afar, inspiring, among other things, some of her most beautiful poems, published first in "Orient"—a journal edited by Wolfgang Yourgrau and Arnold Zweig that we will discuss in the next chapter, which was violently closed down in 1943 due to its anti-Zionist stance—and then in *Das blaue Klavier,* which came out in Jerusalem in 1943, as we shall see. A loving ardor that inflamed her, as Kraft would say,[227] the more Schüler became old and ugly and destined, observed Bauschinger,[228] to be picked on and ridiculed in the small German-Jewish community of Rehavia. The relationship with Simon perhaps unfolded on a different level to the one she would have liked, although what she desired was a love match in fraternity and solidarity, like the love that bound David and Jonathan, and something of everything that was present in their relationship. "I have loved you," she would write to him later, "as some love the new moon or the stars."[229] She also saw in him a person who, like her, was not plagued by the "disease of the time,"[230] namely the inability to indulge in dreams, the inability to *Schwärmen.*

Oppressed by a tyrannical landlady—or so she thought—who rented her a miserable room in the Rehavia neighborhood for a fortune, Schüler felt increasingly alone and persecuted "between foreign walls"[231] and clung to writing, creativity, in the knowledge that the ability to love and work was the only force that could keep her alive. She was working on the draft of her second book on Palestine: "My book is already 200 pages long . . . the play is finished,"[232] she wrote in 1940, alluding to the play *IchundIch*, which is meant to be the central part of her book of prose. In order to write it, she admitted to Simon that she had "given herself up to the hands of a superior force, and so I wrote in abandonment."[233] The 61 pages which include many handwritten corrections, were not intended for printing and were only partly published after the war by Werner Kraft,[234] while the play was not published in full until 1970. This work was bound to arouse controversy and, according to Politzer, its contents "combine transport and madness,"[235] written partly in verse and partly in prose, *IchundIch* is a reworking of the most German

material imaginable, the story of Faust.[236] And it was left to Mephistopheles, noted Jakob Hessing, to utter the phrase that sums up all of Schüler's poetry: "Only eternity is not an exile."[237] Schüler immediately wanted to put on her play in public and read it on 20 July 1940 in the Berger Club in Jerusalem, in front of an audience that included Martin Buber and Ernst Simon.

She reacted to the loneliness and inactivity by founding her own Kraal, namely gathering around herself a circle of friends who simply loved one another and came together in order to mutually share what they cared about and what interested them: "The smile is already a drop of life, an elixir of life," she wrote to Simon.[238] The circle was made up of her closest friends: Werner Kraft, Leopold Krakauer, Friedrich Andreas Meyer, and Samuel Wassermann, her Mortimer, who took her to lectures and to the cinema, and whom she sometimes invited to her house where she prepared a pea soup with croutons and—luxury of luxuries, cold cuts of meat[239]—or more frequently to the vegetarian restaurant Fäberow, one of the places of community, such as Café Sichel, the cinema, or the Kraal itself, where it was possible to encounter the Other, in other words where redemption was closer to hand. Schüler organized these evenings by herself, thus demonstrating her practical talent. She sent and addressed the invitations herself, she rented the venue—at the Bezalel Museum or Dr. Wilhelm's synagogue. She sent personal invitations and placed notices in newspapers, she manned the cash desk and watched carefully over her Kraal.[240] A community of fate where German was spoken and where the subjects chosen by the lecturers—the first was Buber who spoke of the stories of the Hasidim—ranged widely, covering the Near East, Palestine, and Egypt Lloyd Ltd., the situation of the Jews in Soviet Russia, Herzl, the Jew as patient, but where one could also hear Offenbach's Lieder.[241] Simon himself was a guest twice and spoke about the prophet Jeremiah, while Ludwig Strauss and Werner Kraft read their poems and Ben Chorin read his own play; Heinz Politzer was cancelled at the last minute, but then re-invited. The thing she cared about was "learning and listening":[242] "My Kraal is a Kraal of friendship,"[243] she wrote to Werner Kraft, a poet and literary critic in his own right who had emigrated to Palestine in 1933 and was one of the people she was closest to in her final years. We are indebted to him for some of the most significant memories of the poet as well as for actual transcripts of their conservations. One of these is particularly worthy of mention because in it Schüler told him that "she had always wanted a brother as a lover. At least you would know what you had and you would not despise it."[244] What does this mean? Above all, it means that what Schüler needed and missed was a family, because she attributed a utopian quality to the protection and love she had experienced in her childhood and had never found this again. She wanted to be a little girl again: "We want to go back to being little. We can go back to being little," she suggested to Simon, "it is our little magic."[245] The colder and darker the world became,

the more intensely she desired childhood until it amounted to a veritable regression: "I had measles because I was seven years old."[246] She wrote to Ernst Simon: "I sit on his little footrest as I once did before my mother. Womb."[247] In the absence of her family, David and Jonathan became her ideal brothers. She asked Simon: "Would David and Jonathan have been concerned about me or would they have been all puffed up like the amateur Jews here?"[248] . And she was unfortunately forced to admit: "I have never met them here . . . , driven away by the people who are always calculating."[249]

"In Jerusalem I have ended up in hell," she wrote, "I have never come across colder people with stiffer faces, . . . hell is a cold man."[250] She tried in vain to explain herself to those who, like Buber, understood her yet did not understand her: "I am not Zionist, I am not Jewish, I am not Christian, but I believe I am a human being, a profoundly sad human being."[251] She became more and more fragile and often fell in the street. Now a small, stooped, grey figure, she got around by supporting herself on trees or walls. Once, when a dog failed to distinguish her from a wall,[252] she commented: "I am no longer worth anything."[253] She confided to Ernst Simon that there were a great many suicides in her family and then added that this was too cowardly. And concluded: "Life will not let me. . . . A sweet is enough to keep me alive."[254] Only her friendship with the Grosshut family, who lived in Haifa, seemed capable of saving her from "that awful disturbing darkness that is within me,"[255] and offering her shelter, salvation: "And you must be and remain good to me," she advised them on 5 April 1943, "so that I have a home in this world without a homeland that has become dark."[256]

In 1943, a collection of her final poems was published in Jerusalem entitled *Mein blaues Klavier.* The publisher was Moritz Spitzer, at one time assistant to Martin Buber and curator of the Schocken library. The blue cover bore a hand drawing by the author. "I take my leave of my friends," and it is dedicated to her friends in the cities of Germany and to those who, like herself, had been exiled and scattered around the world. Only four of the 32 poems were written in Jerusalem, while the others date from her Swiss exile. A single poem is dedicated to Jerusalem:

Jerusalem

Gott baute aus Seinem Rückgrat: Palästina
aus einem einzigen Knochen: Jerusalem
Ich wandele wie durch Mausoleen-
Versteint ist unsere Heilige Stadt.
Es ruhen Steine in den Betten ihrer toten Seen
Statt Wasserseiden, die da spielten: Kommen und Vergehen.

Es starren Gründe hart den Wanderer an-
Und er versinkt in ihre starren Nächte.

ich habe Angst, die ich nicht überwältigen kann.

Wenn du doch kämest . . .
Im lichten Alpenmantel eingehüllt-
Und meines Tages Dämmerstunde nähmest-
Mein Arm umrahmte dich, ein hilfreich Heiligenbild.

Wie einst wenn ich im Dunkel meines Herzens litt-
Da deine Augen beide: blaue Wolken.
Sie nahmen mich aus meinem Trübsinn mit.

Wenn du doch kämest-
In das Land der Ahnen-
Du würdest wie ein Kindlein mich ermahnen:
Jerusalem-erfahre Auferstehen!

Es grüssen uns
Des "Einzigehn Gottes" lebendige Fahnen,
Grünende Hände, die des Lebens Odem säen.[257]

The image of the stone and the bone, already present in *Mein Volk* and *This Hebrew Land*, from which the people of God and her city Jerusalem arose and that also supported her, now struck the poet with fear, observed Politzer, it seemed to her like a lifeless nightmare of rigidity.[258] "I believe that the Jerusalem of God is dead," she had written in June 1941 to Ernst Simon.[259] The holy city seemed to her to be a necropolis:[260] "I stroll as through mausoleums/Petrified is our holy city," she continued, acting as a guide through the rough and rocky terrain, which was certainly indestructible and eternal, of Jerusalem, which now seemed to her to be gloomy, threatening, a claustrophobic place with rigid boundaries.[261] The invocation to a friend, most likely Emil Raas, "If you would still come to the land of our forefathers," is a kind of prayer. His closeness, his friendship and protection would drive away her fear, bringing the light that was necessary to remove the obscurity and darkness, calling on the poet and perhaps Jerusalem itself to the resurrection that Schüler eternally awaited.

While in the poem that we mentioned at the beginning Shulamite wandered around the holy city in search of her beloved, finding only death, now forty years later in *Ich liebe Dich . . .*—one of the finest poems dedicated "To Him," Ernst Simon—Schüler, with a final flourish of poetic strength, "overturned the images and transformed the dusty theme of death to a symbol of glowing life. The inspiration of the holy city," observed Jakob Hessing, "had its effect and raised the two figures into the light":[262]

Ich liebe Dich . . .

Die Welt ist taub,
Die Welt ist blind
Und auch die Wolke
Und das Laub-
-Nur wir, der goldene Staub
Aus dem wir zwei bereitet:
-Sind![263]

In the blind and deaf world that has thus become obscured, only the lovers *are*. In other words they are saved, because they are made out of gold-dust; they are pure and unpolluted; their love is unique and independent of everything that surrounds them.

She spent her twilight years looking after stragglers, or rather innocents, because no wretched reality she encountered could dispel her dream. She spoke up for the street children who were forced to haggle because they were not loved and looked after by their families, and planned homes, benefits, and education for them.[264] She also asked her friends to help do something for her beloved donkeys, who were burdened with loads that were too heavy and also beaten. "The inhabitants of Jerusalem," she wrote, "seem not even to have noticed these monstrous facts and ignore these roadside disasters."[265] "If we do not do something ourselves," she asked Simon, "what will become of it? Like Babel and Gomorrah?"[266] She called on the inhabitants of Jerusalem to have mercy and reminded them that in Eden "the first couple of human beings had to play with the animals, give them names, call them to play."[267] Now more than ever her ideal Jerusalem was Eden, a paradigm of the relationship among men and between mankind and creation.

Now she could only help, she could no longer be helped. It is true, as Werner Kraft said, that she was never alone—many people welcomed her and loved her, that she was not left to her own devices, even financially, but instead she received subsidies that would have been unimaginable as subsistence for a poet in another country.[268] All this is true, but her inner perception of her condition was very different. The ageing process that did not spare her, the war, and the catastrophe of the European Jews and no longer having any home or family had sharpened her sensitivity and fueled her feeling of abandonment and dereliction. Yet these explanations did not change her testimony. Particularly in her final years, she felt that nothing and no one could provide her with a remedy: "I am lost and out of reach and I cannot reach anyone. My life has ended in a prison,"[269] she wrote to Fritz Weisskopf on 18 June 1943. She even signed herself "Yours disgustingly."[270] She tried to numb herself with alcohol in the evening, "if no one comes round."[271] And she admitted to the Grosshuts: "Being with these people is too difficult for me. Even David would have left."[272] "I know a lot of people here that I like but there is no thread to keep us together," she wrote on 4 November 1943,

and also: "Here, in the holy land—it is strange—humanity does not tighten into a chain."[273] Exile among the Jews is a harsh exile. "I am finished," she wrote to Simon on 31 December 1943, "I cannot love any more."[274] And to Werner Kraft on 22 June 1944: "Everything is over within me. . . . Love, friendship are hands. My own, broken."[275] "I have no external refuge, no support and Paradise must then be my crutch,"[276] she wrote to Simon on 28 July 1944 and then admitted to him: "I have no more hope, Ernest Apollo."[277] "I love you! Day into night," she declared to her "golden boy," in one of her last letters, and concluded: "Men are not noble enough to love."[278]

Else Lasker-Schüler died on 22 January 1945, following a heart attack, in "no man's land."[279] Her death throes lasted for several days, because her heart, in the words of Wolfgang Yourgrau, "did not want to surrender."[280] She was buried on the Mount of Olives. Kurt Wilhelm gave a moving funeral oration, ending with the reading of her poem: "Soon, I know, I must die," while Shmuel Josef Agnon recited the Kaddisch.

It seems fitting to conclude with two very significant letters, this time addressed to Else Lasker-Schüler, in order not to leave her by herself. We have let her speak, but we have not heard enough from the friends she was close to during her last, difficult years. Perhaps the time has come for them to have a voice as well: "Maybe we will see a change in our Land, our anguish and poverty and perhaps the high city you dreamed of will take the place of the ghetto," Walter Turnowski wrote to her on 1 November 1944 "with walls built only against the enemy and not against our sons and daughters. Then there will be room for you as well."[281] "My dear Tino," wrote Wolfgang Yourgrau on 11 June 1944 from Cairo, where he now lived,

> Today, flicking through the pages of my poor review,[282] I again came across the poems I published for you. They are so wonderful that one should really read them every day. Now I am telling you beautiful things and you must not protest as usual, but learn to swallow it. And I am blatantly taking advantage of the opportunity offered me by writing a letter because you cannot answer back. Tino, we have all been very happy with you. Sometimes you have been a hard nut, very spiky, suspicious and obstinate, fierce as a whipped dog. You have had many disappointments in life. Yet you have not learned one thing: to discover who your friends are. Tinki and I really love you, as one can only love someone very close to you. And every time we tried to give you a little of our warmth, you flew away like a frightened bird. Why did you never let yourself go? You never let us show you our friendship and kindness, but grumbled like a stubborn boy. . . . I am truly happy that my defunct review contained your work. Sometimes I think that I wrote my best editorials after you started to work for us. I learned a lot from you, even without knowing it. Tino, my goodness, I am very optimistic for you and for us. You will still have a great time, full of joy and inner calm when all this is over. We will huddle together somewhere to tell each other what we think and do something together.[283]

These two letters speak of the future, a future that Else Lasker-Schüler never knew. "The great time" for her work has now arrived and this is perhaps true of herself as a person. The payoff was posthumous and too late, but that is perhaps another story.[284]

NOTES

1. "Misrael" in the original. A play on words by the author: *mis* is a negative prefix in German, *mies* (pronounced *mis*) in Yiddish means odious, ugly, or difficult.
2. E. Lasker-Schüler, *Prosa. Das Hebräerland,* edited by J. Skrodtzky and I. Schedletzky, in Id., *Werke und Briefe*, Kritische Ausgabe, Vol. 5, on behalf of the Franz Rosenzweig Centre of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the University of Wuppertal, and the German Literature Archive in Marbach am Neckar, edited by A.B. Kilcher, N. Oellers, H. Rölleke, and I. Shedletzky, Jüdischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main. 2002, p. 11 (henceforth hl, followed by a page reference). Unless otherwise indicated, the translations are ad hoc.
3. Hebräer has been translated as "Hebrews."
4. hl, p. 9.
5. On the subject of the Zionist utopian novel, see the contribution of L. Hadomi, *Jüdische Identität und der zionistiche Utopieroman*, lbi Bulletin 86 (1990), pp. 23–64.
6. A. Bodenheimer, *Die auferlegte Heimat, Else Lasker-Schülers Emigration in Palästina*, Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen 1995, p. 3.
7. Else Lasker-Schüler, *Briefe 1941–1945*, *Nachträge*, in Id., *Kritische Ausgabe*, Vol. 11, edited by K.J. Skrodtzky and A.B. Kilcher, Jüdischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2010, p. 367 (henceforth *Briefe 1941–1945*, followed by the page reference).
8. E. Lasker-Schüler, *Gedichte*, edited by K.J. Skrodtzky with the collaboration of N. Oellers, in Id., *Kritische Ausgabe*, Vol. 1.1, Jüdischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1996, p. 157 (henceforth *Gedichte*, followed by the page reference). *My people* Crumbling is the rock/ From which I spring, from which I sing God's psalms. . . / Suddenly I fall / And trickle away/ Far away, alone over the wailing stones/ Down to the sea. // I have cleansed the dregs of wine/ From my blood. / And yet the echo/ Still resounds in me/ When eastward bound/ The crumbling rock,/ My people /Cry out to God.
9. W. Kraft, *Nachwort*, in E. Lasker-Schüler, *Gesammelte Werke in drei Bänden*, *Verse und Prosa aus dem Nachlaß*, Vol. 3, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 1996, p. 151.
10. S. Bauschinger, "*Ich bin Jude Gott sei Dank*." *Else Lasker-Schüler*, in G. E. Grimm and H. P. Bayerdörfer (ed.), *Im Zeichen Hiobs. Jüdische Schriftsteller und deutsche Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert*, Athäneum, Frankfurt am Main 1988, p. 88.
11. W. Kraft, Epilogue, in Else Lasker-Schüler, *Gesammelte Werke in drei Bänden*, cit., p. 158.
12. E. Lasker-Schüler, *Briefe 1914–1924*, edited by K.J. Skrodzki, Jüdischer Verlag, in Id., *Kritische Ausagabe*, Vol. 7, Frankfurt am Main 2004, p. 11 et seq. (henceforth *Briefe 1914–1924* followed by the page reference).
13. "Yiddish," she wrote in *This Hebrew Land*, "is not a scion of the ancient language of the Hebrews." See hl, p. 103.
14. Else Lasker-Schüler, *Briefe 1893–1913*, edited by U. Marquardt, in Id., *Kritische Ausgabe*, Vol. 6, Jüdischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2003, p. 46.
15. See S. Bauschinger, *Else Lasker-Schüler, Biographie*, Wallstein Verlag, Göttingen 2004 (2nd edition, 2005), p. 189 (henceforth, Bauschinger, *Biographie*).
16. Schüler probably drew inspiration for the term "Hebräer" from the work of Oscar Goldberg, *Die Wirklichkeit der Hebräer* (1925), who was an author that she knew. Like Goldberg, Schüler also focused on the original, pre-mythical, and prehistoric Judaism.
17. H. Politzer, *Else Lasker-Schüler*, in *Expressionismus als Literatur, Gesammelte Studien*, edited by W. Rothe, Francke Verlag, Bern 1969, p. 222.
18. The expression "Hebräerland" is found once only in the Bible, in Genesis 40:15 attributed to Joseph, see A. Bodenheimer, *Dir auferlegte Heimat*, cit., p. 29.

19. *Briefe 1914–1924*, p. 252.
20. See Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 273.
21. V. Verrienti, *Else Lasker-Schüler: leggenda e verità poetica*, in E. Lasker-Schüler *Arthur Aronymus. La storia di mio padre,* edited by V. Verrienti, Marsilio, Venice 1996, p. 15.
22. E. Lasker-Schüler, *Briefe 1933–36*, edited by K.J. Skrodtzki, in Id., *Kritische Ausgabe*, Vol. 9, Jüdischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2008, p. 11 (henceforth: *Briefe 1933–1936*).
23. V. Verrienti, *Else Lasker-Schüler*, cit., p. 16.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
25. Poem, p. 262.
26. *Briefe 1933–36*, p. 9.
27. *Ibidem*.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
29. Shmuel Yosef Agnon (1888–1970). Born in Habsburg Galicia, he emigrated to Palestine in 1908 and then moved there permanently in 1924. He was a Jewish poet, short story writer, and novelist of the first magnitude. He wrote mostly in Hebrew as well as in Yiddish. In 1966, he received the Nobel Prize for literature together with the poet Nelly Sachs.
30. *Briefe 1933–36*, p. 18.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
32. *Ibidem*.
33. *Ibid*., p. 26.
34. *Ibid*., p. 53. She was referring to David, when he took the Ark to Jerusalem (Samuel, 6, 12–16).
35. *Ibid*., p. 91.
36. Poem, p. 262.
37. J. Hessing, *Else Lasker-Schülers Hollental*, in G. Scheider, *7 Tage in Jerusalem*, *Fotografien im Dialog mit Else Lasker-Schüler*, H. Hahn (ed.), Bleicher Verlag, Gerlingen 2002, p. 95.
38. *Briefe 1933–1936*, p. 109.
39. Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 366–367.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 368.
41. *Briefe 1933–1936*, p. 113.
42. The moon is a male noun in German: *der Mond*.
43. *Briefe 1933–1936*, p. 114.
44. Bergmann noted in his diary: "Yesterday saw the arrival of Else Lasker-Schüler, who is astonishingly crazy. . . . Fate is terrible: . . . when your dream comes true you cannot enjoy it," in S.H. Bergman, *Tagebücher und Briefe*, Vol. 1, cit., p. 356.
45. *Briefe 1933–1936*, p. 114.
46. *Ibidem*.
47. *Ibidem*.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
49. *Ibid*., p. 117.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
51. G. Baioni, *Presentazione*, in *Poesie*, p. 17.
52. *Briefe 1933–1936,* p. 120.
53. G. Baioni, *Presentazione*, in *Poesie*, p. 17.
54. *Briefe 1933–1936*, p. 122.
55. *Ibidem*.
56. Here, significantly, Schüler wrote *Judenland* instead of *Hebräerland*.
57. *Briefe 1933–1936*, p. 123.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

63. See S. Schlenstedt, *Das Hebräerland der Dichterin Palästina-Projekt neu gelesen*, in *Deine Sehnsucht war die Schlange*, *Ein Else Lasker-Schüler-Almanach*, edited by A. Linsel and P. von Matt, Hammer Verlag, Wuppertal 1997, p. 132 et seq.
64. Here *Juden*, not *Hebräer*.
65. *Briefe 1933–1936*, p. 161–162.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
68. *Ibidem*.
69. hl, p. 11.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
71. *Briefe 1933–1936*, p. 244.
72. *Ibidem*.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 254.
74. *Ibid.*, pp. 265–266.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 271.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 297.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 311.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 331.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 336.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 377.
82. Schalom Ben Chorin (1913–1999), thinker and essayist, born in Monaco and died in Jerusalem.
83. E. Lasker-Schüler, *Nachträge*, in Id., *Briefe 1941–1945*, edited by K.J. Skrodzki and A.B. Kilcher, *Kritische Ausgabe*, Tape 11, Jüdischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2010, p. 463 (henceforth *Briefe 1941–1945*, followed by the page reference).
84. *Ibid.*, p. 464.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 388.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 406.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 409.
89. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 10.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
91. hl, p. 9.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
95. *Ibid.*, pp. 104–105.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
97. S. Schlenstedt, *Das Hebräerland der Dichterin Palätina-Projekt neu gelesen*, cit., p. 130.
98. hl, pp. 11–12.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
102. See Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 197.
103. hl, p. 111. It is interesting to remember that the gaze of the German Jewish writer and journalist Arthur Holitscher dwelt with loving compassion on the poor donkeys during his trip to Palestine in 1922: “Their coats are so silvery, their tender ears are pink inside. Their large yellow-rimmed eyes look down on the hard, pointed stones. At a cry from the Arab, they stop without resting, patient and loyal, waiting for a cry or to be struck by the stick, which means that they have to start walking again. Motionless, gentle and silvery, they stand in the Bazaar, tied to the ring of a door jamb, and the pressing multitude smashes into them, pounding their thin, easily-injured legs. Say a prayer, O men, . . . when your path takes you past a small donkey heavily laden by the roadside, faithful, with his head hanging down!” The writer, socialist, and Zionist believed that a new fairer and redemptive world should also apply to

donkeys. See A. Holitscher, *Reise durch das jüdische Palästina*, Fischer Verlag, Berlin 1922, p. 97.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
106. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
107. See p. 11.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
110. H. Politzer, *Else Lasker-Schüler*, in *Expressionismus als Literatur,* cit., p. 220.
111. See A. Bodenheimer, *Die auferlegte Heimat*, cit., p. 18.
112. hl, p. 11.
113. See Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 371.
114. hl, p. 74.
115. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
116. On this subject, see the compelling observations by S. DeKoven Ezrahi, *When Exiles Return: Jerusalem as Topos of the Mind and the Soil*, in *Placeless Topographies. Jewish Perspectives on the Literature of Exile*, edited by Bernhard Greiner, Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen 2003, p. 51.
117. hl, p. 75.
118. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
119. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
120. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
122. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
123. *Ibid.*, p. 38–39.
124. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
125. See *Ibid.*, p. 31.
126. A passage in a letter sent on 11 April 1934 by Scholem to his friend Walter Benjamin is significant in this regard: "Else Lasker-Schüler is here at the moment. She would be better suited to any other country in the world than the real East and as far as I can see she is on the verge of madness. Nevertheless, she remains a truly remarkable character. She had a conversation with King David that lasted half an hour and is now asking me to give her a cabalistic explanation of it. And unfortunately I'm not even persuaded that she actually saw him," in Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem, *Teologia e utopia. Carteggio 1933–1940*, edited by Gershom Scholem, Italian translation by A. M. Marietti, Einaudi, Torino 1987, pp. 122–123.
127. hl, p. 29.
128. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
129. *Ibidem*.
130. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
131. *Ibidem*.
132. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
133. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
134. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
135. *Ibid.*, p. 68–69.
136. W. Kaiser, *Eine Reisebeschreibung als poetisch-religiöser Entwurf. Else Lasker-Schüler [1937]: Das Hebräerland*, in Id., *Palästina-Erez Israel. Deutschsprachige Reisebeschreibungen jüdischer Autoren von der Jahrhundertwende bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Olms Verlag, Hildesheim-Zürich-New York 1992, p. 341. On this subject, see also L. Bosco *Ritratto dell'artista come orientale. Else Lasker-Schüler*, in Id., *Tra Babilonia e Gerusalemme. Scrittori ebreo-tedeschi e il* "*terzo spazio*," Bruno Mondadori, Milan 2012, p. 121.
137. hl, p. 125.
138. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
139. hl, *Entwürfe*, p. 397.
140. Else Lasker-Schüler, *Briefe 1937–1940*, edited by K.J. Skrodzki and A.B. Kilcher, in Id., *Kritische Ausgabe*, Vol. 10, Jüdischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2009, p. 55 (hereafter *Briefe 1937–1940*, followed by the page number).

141. Else Lasker-Schüler, *Prosa 1921–1945* published posthumously, edited by K.J. Skrodzki and I. Schedletzky, in Id., *Kritische Ausgabe*, Vol. 4.1, Jüdischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2001, p. 460 (hereafter: *Prosa 1921–1945,* published posthumously, followed by the page reference).
142. Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 398.
143. *Ibid.*, p. 398.
144. *Ibidem.*
145. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 56.
146. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
147. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
148. *Ibid.*, pp. 64–65.
149. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
150. *Ibidem*.
151. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
152. *Ibidem*.
153. See *Ibid.*, p. 69.
154. E. Lasker-Schüler, *IchundIch*. *Nachlaßschauspiel*, edited by Margarete Kupper, in "Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft," xiv, Stuttgart 1970.
155. *Briefe 1937–1940,* p. 69.
156. See A. Bodenheimer, *Die auferlegte Heimat*, cit., p. 74.
157. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 69.
158. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
159. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
160. E. Lasker-Schüler, *Ich erzähle etwas von Palästina*, "Jüdische Rundschau" (Berlin), Vol. 42. Issue 88 dated 5 November 1937, p. 10 et seq. now in *Prosa 1921–1945*, published posthumously*,* pp. 294–300.
161. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
162. *Ibidem*.
163. *Ibid.*, p. 295.
164. *Ibidem*.
165. *Ibid.*, p. 296.
166. *Ibidem*.
167. *Ibid.*, p. 298.
168. *Ibid.*, p. 300.
169. *Ibidem*.
170. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 83.
171. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
172. *Ibid*., p. 101.
173. *Ibidem*.
174. *Ibid*., p. 124.
175. *Ibid*., p. 126.
176. *Ibid*., p. 157.
177. *Ibid*., p. 183.
178. *Ibid*., p. 170.
179. Else Lasker-Schüler, *Gesammelte Werke in drei Bänden*, *Prosa und Schauspiele*, edited by Friedhelm Kemp, Vol. II, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 1998, p. 225.
180. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 200.
181. *Auf der Galiläa nach Palästina*, in *Prosa 1921–1945*, published posthumously, p. 427. This passage was also intended for inclusion in her second book on Palestine.
182. *Ibid*., p. 431.
183. See Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 410.
184. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 214.
185. *Ibid*., p. 217.
186. *So lange die Welt besteht, ja-ewiglich* . . . , in *Prosa 1921–1945*, published posthumously, p. 437.
187. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 215.

188. See M. Brenner, *Breve storia del sionismo*, cit., p. 120–125.
189. *So lange die Welt besteht, ja-ewiglich* . . . , cit., p. 438.
190. See Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 412.
191. She was referring to Psalms 7:10, Jeremiah 11.20; 17.10; 20.12.
192. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 228.
193. *Ibid*., p. 224.
194. *Ibid*., p. 231.
195. *Ibid*., p. 234.
196. *Ibid*., p. 236.
197. *Ibidem*.
198. *Ibidem*.
199. *Ibid*., p. 238.
200. See *Ibid*., p. 235.
201. *Ibid*., p. 242.
202. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
203. *Ibid*., p. 246.
204. *Ibid*., p. 248.
205. *Ibid*., p. 249.
206. *Ibid*., p. 251.
207. See Bodenheimer, *Die auferlegte Heimat*, cit.
208. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 263. After the outbreak of the World War, it was prohibited to send letters abroad written in German, and Schüler chose to write in English. See Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 416.
209. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 266.
210. *Ibid*., p. 267.
211. *Briefe 1933–1936,* p. 426.
212. Schüler said she was born in 1876 instead of 1869, meaning that the age Ben Chorin revealed was still less than her true age, because at that time she was 66 and not 60.
213. See *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 302.
214. Ernst Akiba Simon (1899–1988), educator and cultural critic, who emigrated from Germany to Palestine in 1928. Between 1930 and 1933 he taught at the scientific high school in Haifa, and from 1935, he taught at the teachers' training college in Jerusalem and at the Hebrew University. In 1939, he became a lecturer in the history of education and in 1950 he became a lecturer in education at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.
215. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 314.
216. *Ibid*., p. 316.
217. Poem, p. 161: "We are written in the Bible/ Bound by blood: // Yet our youthful games / Live on in the star. // I am David / You are my companion. // O, we dyed / Our white rams' hearts red! //Like the buds in psalms of love / Under Sabbath skies. // But, the farewell in your eyes/ You always took your leave with a silent kiss. // But what will become of your heart/ Without my heart// Of your sweet night / Without my songs," in *Poems*, p. 171.
218. Poem, pp. 204–205: "O Jonathan, I languish palely in thy lap,/My heart falls solemnly in dark folds/Thou carest for my moon in your temple/The gold from the star shalt thou receive. Thou art my heaven, my sweet companion. // I lingered to watch the frozen world/Always so remote, only in a stream . . . / But now it falls from my eyes/ Melted by thy love . . . / O Jonathan, take the royal tear,/ It glistens fine and gentle as a bride. // O Jonathan, thou blood of sweet fig / Fragrant aroma hanging from my branch / Thou ring in the skin of my lip," in Poems*,* p. 173. The poet also returned to the two figures of David and Jonathan in 1944, with a poem entitled *Das Bogenlied*, see Poem, pp. 342–343, in which she revisited the theme of love, friendship, and brotherhood.
219. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 316.
220. *Ibidem*.
221. *Ibid*., p. 293.
222. *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 10.
223. *Ibid*., p. 272.
224. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 319.

225. *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 22.
226. Letter from Ernst Simon to Else Lasker-Schüler (8 August 1941) now in *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 511.
227. W. Kraft, *Else Lasker-Schüler in den Tagebüchern von Werner Kraft 1923–1945*, selected by Volker Kahmen, in *Else Lasker-Schüler 1869–1945*, edited by E. Klausner and Fr. Pfäfflin, Marbacher Magazin, Tübingen 1995, p. 357.
228. See Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 434.
229. *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 288.
230. *Ibid*., p. 13.
231. *Ibid*., p. 98.
232. *Briefe 1937–1940*, p. 310.
233. *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 15.
234. E. Lasker-Schüler, *Verse und Prosa aus dem Nachlaß*, edited by W. Kraft, Kösel Verlag, Munich 1961.
235. H. Politzer, *Else Lasker-Schüler,* in *Expressionismus als Literatur*, cit., p. 227.
236. See Bauschinger, *Biographie,* p. 420. The play opened in Jerusalem, in the Hinnon Valley, which Schüler renamed the Valley of Hell. The poet explained to the spectators and actors the title and the conclusion, in which the two halves into which the poet was split were reunited and the devil of devils, in other words Hitler, capitulated. In the acts following the prologue, the top brass of the Nazi regime made their appearance in the Palace of Hell as the Nazi troops who wished to conquer Hell itself strutted across the background only to sink into a lake of lava. Hitler, Ribbentrop, Rosenberg, and Himmler suffered much the same fate. Around this central core, the stage was occupied by secondary action, characters, various extras with frequent interruptions from the director, and the poet. The poet's mother was the godmother of the play. The Nazis all agreed that they were anti-Semites and are depicted as being responsible for the destruction of the German culture and Christian heritage. Mephistopheles, who was the rational ego as opposed to Faust's emotional ego, explained to Faust that Hitler was the destroyer of his people. Man, not the Devil, is responsible for evil. In the sixth and final act, the poet, now exhausted, enters a garden, which turns out to be a garden where Schüler often took refuge, the garden of the ophthalmologist Dr. Ticho. Here she met a scarecrow who actually also turned out to be an immigrant, an extremely cultured man who was an intimate of Goethe and who, on feast days, bore the names of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while his real name was "little Kohn," a term Schüler used to denote German Jewry. Gershom Swet, who appeared in the prologue, now entered the stage to interview the poet and ask whether her play had solved the riddle of the world. She answered in the negative before expiring. In the epilogue, she or an angel was heard to pronounce the moral of the play: the Devil, in the form of a heavenly goblin who was none other than Mephistopheles, had returned to heaven. Mephistopheles and Faust with the poet in the middle appeared before God. The poet had brought together the two halves of her ego and at the same time also the two halves Faust and Mephistopheles and had been brought back to God.
237. J. Hessing, *Else Lasker-Schüler, Biographie einer deutsch-jüdischen Dichterin*, von Loeper Verlag, Karlsruhe 1985, p. 206.
238. *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 18.
239. Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 437.
240. *Ibid*., p. 427.
241. *Ibidem.*
242. *Ibid*., p. 429.
243. *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 121.
244. W. Kraft, *Else Lasker-Schüler in den Tagebüchern von Werner Kraft 1923–1945*, cit., p. 346.
245. *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 133.
246. *Ibid*., p. 346.
247. *Ibid*., p. 361.
248. *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 19.
249. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
250. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

251. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
252. Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 442–444.
253. *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 133.
254. *Ibid.*, p. 297.
255. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
256. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
257. Gedichte, pp. 282–283: "Jerusalem. *God built from his spine: Palestine / From a single bone: Jerusalem.* I stroll as through mausoleums/Petrified is our holy city. / There stones rest on the beds of dead lakes/Instead of the silky waters that played there: come and gone. // The unflinching depths glare at the wayfarer / And he sinks into their harsh nights. / I am afraid and I cannot overcome it. // If you would still come . . . / shrouded in your pale cloak of light–/ if you would take the dark hour of my day, / image of holy piety, my arm/would frame you. // Like once, when I suffered in the darkness of my heart–/ there were your eyes: twin blue clouds. They lifted me from my gloom. // If you would still come–/To the land of our forefathers–/ you would admonish me like a child: Jerusalem—arise again! // Greeted by the vibrant flags of the "one God,"/Green hands that sow the breath of life" in *Poems*, p. 191–193.
258. H. Politzer, *Else Lasker-Schüler*, in *Expressionismus als Literatur*, cit., p. 226.
259. *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 35.
260. Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 431.
261. On Jerusalem as a claustrophobic place or rather a place that could be extended at will, see S. DeKoven Ezrahi, *When Exiles Return*, cit., p. 50.
262. J. Hessing, *Else Lasker-Schüler in Hollental*, cit., p. 107.
263. *Das Blaue Klavier*, in Gedichte, p. 298–299. *I love you* "The world is deaf, /The world is blind/ And the cloud/ And the leaves–/–Only we, the golden dust/ From which we both are made: /–We are!"
264. *Ibid.*, p. 312.
265. *Prosa 1921–1945*, published posthumously, p. 479.
266. *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 76.
267. *Prosa 1921–1945*, published posthumously, p. 480.
268. See Werner Kraft, postscript, in E. Lasker-Schüler, *Gesammelte Werke in drei Bänden, Verse und Prosa aus dem Nachlaß*, Vol. 3, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 1998, p. 153.
269. *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 250.
270. *Ibid.*, p. 315.
271. *Ibid.*, p. 307, see Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 442.
272. *Briefe 1941–1945*, p. 300.
273. *Ibid.*, p. 303.
274. *Ibid.*, p. 313.
275. *Ibid.*, p. 333.
276. *Ibidem.*
277. *Ibid.*, p. 361.
278. *Ibid.*, p. 363.
279. J. Hessing, *Dichterin im Vakuum*, in "Text+Kritik," issue 122, April 1994, Kösel Verlag, Munich, p. 3.
280. Bauschinger, *Biographie*, p. 447.
281. Letter kept in the Jerusalem Library Archive in the Else Lasker-Schüler binder, jnul Arc.Ms.Var.501/5/285.
282. Together with Arnold Zweig, Wolfgang Yourgrau edited the review "Orient" in which Schüler published some of her last poems.
283. Letter kept in the Jerusalem Library Archive in the Else Lasker-Schüler binder, jnul Arc.Ms.Var.501:298.
284. On the reception of Else Lasker-Schüler, see the contribution of J. Hessing, *Die Heimkehr einer jüdischen Emigrantin. Else Lasker-Schülers mythisierende Rezeption 1945–1971*, Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen 1993. On the subject of Israeli and German recognition of her work, see the essays mentioned during this chapter as well as a critical edition on the works of Schüler, completed in 2010, which contains contributions by German and Israeli institutions and German and Israeli academics.

Arnold Zweig Goes Home

Stranger in a Strange Land

For Arnold Zweig, the Zionist effort and more generally the engagement with Judaism evolved in a very specific way. From the very outset, he swung between bursts of enthusiasm and steps to distance himself from the movement. Zweig was still very young when in 1905, at the age of 18—he was born in Glogau on 10 November 1887—he fell under the influence of his father who was a member of the Katowice Zionist movement and founded the Jewish craftsmen's association together with some local supporters of the movement. Zweig nevertheless owed his true experience of Jewish spiritual rebirth to a subsequent meeting with Martin Buber, who as we have already learned was the mentor and teacher of an entire generation of central European Jews who were offspring of the assimilation crisis.

In a letter of 1912, Zweig wrote to Buber that the latter's books had made him aware of the Jewish problem after Zionist rhetoric had pushed him into art and related matters.[1] These matters were marked by an ambivalence toward Zionism as much as toward the Jewish problem, as evidenced by his work *Aufzeichnungen über eine Familie Klopfer* (1909)—a short novel written in the manner and tone of *fin de siècle* decadence—in which Zweig, in a fatal oxymoron, linked rebirth in the land of Israel with death: the last representatives of the Klopfers, a Jewish family, emigrated from Russia to Palestine not so much to be reborn as to die, leaving no trace of themselves behind. The thing that the Klopfers took from the west to Palestine was their experience of exile and the diaspora, as Heinrich, the last of the Klopfers, succinctly put it: "In this people with Asian beginnings, we are the last Europeans, detached from all roots, all laws, all morals, independent of any value . . . without future." Yet Heinrich continued, "I am glad I drank from

the springs of Europe and no one can force me to forget it."[2] We will do well to keep these words in mind as we follow the fate of the writer in Palestine, because they at least partly presage his future experience in Eretz Yisrael.

As early as 1913, Zweig acknowledged himself to be a militant Zionist and wrote to his friend Helene Weyl: "You know how passionately and joyously Jewish I am and I have also told you that you can count me among the leaders of the Jewish revival."[3] The first published fruit of this Jewish revival was the essay *Die Demokratie und die Seele des Judentums*, published in 1913 in the legendary *Vom Judentum*, an anthology by young Zionists in Prague that was known as a veritable think tank of spiritual Zionism. In this contribution by Zweig criticizing assimilation and western Judaism, he recalled how original Judaism that had not yet been contaminated by democracy was class-oriented, community-based, and socialist. Zweig also argued that Zionism itself was the renewal of Judaism advocated by Buber: "We must become different, become new,"[4] the writer avowed. But he was ultimately left with the doubt, also present in *Familie Klopfer*, that the generation of young Jews, among whom he numbered himself, was condemned to wander in the wilderness and would never reach Canaan: "We are the generation that will wander and perish in the desert."[5] This too was a kind of premonition of his personal experiences in Palestine, when Zweig would act as if he had not yet trodden the promised land.

Judaism and Zionism are thus present in his pre-war literary reflections. We need only mention his play *Ritualmord in Ungarn*, composed in 1913, with his final prophecy of rebirth in the land of Israel.[6] Palestine was nevertheless a goal that he saw from a distance, an imaginary horizon that would never be reached. He saw rebirth in Palestine as an alternative to his experience of the diaspora and the humiliation of exile but it nevertheless remained, in certain terms, just another option and sometimes an option that could not stand up to comparison with German or European culture. This was the experience of the young Eli Saamen, in *Quartettsatz von Schönberg*, a short story written in 1913. The main character in the story was about to leave for Palestine and on his last evening he listened in rapture to a Schönberg quartet that revealed to him how inseparable and deep his ties with Europe and its culture really were, as the rolling wheels of the train that was to take him far away seemed to intone: "Return, Return!"[7] After a year, he thought, he would return to the "wells of Europe": for Eli Saamen Palestine was therefore immediately a temporary home, not a final landing place and much less a fulfillment.

The war suspended but did not stop this ferment. Like many Jewish German intellectuals, Zweig—who wanted to set out immediately as a volunteer—saw the war as a break with a quietistic and bourgeois order, fusing and blending Jews and non-Jews into a single, great German people. This was quite a common occurrence among German Jews and German Zionists who

went to war partly because they were planning to release their Jewish brothers from the yoke of czarist anti-Semitism. Zweig let himself be swept along by the ambiguity of this enthusiasm and wrote to Weyl: "I take part with passion in the fate of our Germany *as a Jew*; in a manner innate in me as a Jew I make the German cause my own cause. I do not cease to be a Jew, but I feel even more Jewish the more savagely I rejoice, the more intensely I feel, the more frenetically I am moved to action."[8]

In the end he was reminded that he was not German by the war itself, as the horror of this catastrophe played out, and by the *Judenzählung* (the counting of Jews after Verdun, ordered by the German authorities to expose the high number of Jewish deserters, the results of which were never disclosed because they showed the opposite to be true). After Verdun, in April 1916, the writer was deployed to the eastern front, first Bialystok, then Kowno, and lastly Vilna. Here he had the opportunity to meet eastern Jews who were not isolated and crammed into the big cities of the west, but en masse, as a people, in the reality of their daily lives. In 1920 he wrote *Ostjüdisches Antlitz*, a hymn to the eastern Jewish civilization that was now becoming extinct and a fictionalization of its characters based on this experience and a meeting with the Zionist printmaking artist from Berlin Hermann Struck—who Zweig would meet again in Palestine. The eastern Jews rekindled his interest in Judaism and also made him see Zionism from another perspective. In the writer's eyes, they embodied the present-day Jewish raw material that enabled him to envisage a Judaism of the future, a Jewish rebirth in Eretz Yisrael, a rebirth that was both Jewish and socialist. In Palestine, as we shall see, this dream became dramatically downsized.

Carried away by his enthusiasm, Zweig imagined in Nietzschean terms the re-Mediterranization of Judaism in Palestine: when they came into contact with the light and air of the Mediterranean Sea in the old and new land, eastern Jews would be emancipated from the shackles of tradition and reshape their spirits, freeing bodies that had been repressed by the slavery of the ghetto. This rebirth would also be social, socialist, because it would fulfill the contempt in which young eastern Jews naturally held capitalism, a contempt arising out of their spiritual natures. Young eastern Jews were called to a "realization" of whether it would be possible to combine socialism with Zionism, with work on the land, with a settlement that would make their work in Palestine holy. Influenced by Gustav Landauer, a martyr of the Munich Revolution and an anarchic and socialist thinker and activist, Zweig became the proponent of an anarchic, non-Marxist socialism that boiled down to a rejection of State in favor of community: "Experiencing the socialist spirit in small stateless settlements, driven by a non-political spirit of community with common ownership of the land and means of production, a Jewish land, the land of our labours and of our fulfilment."[9] This was the

romantic utopia of Palestine, a utopia that filled Zweig with great expectations, which as we shall see would turn out to be largely disappointed.

During the years of the Weimar Republic, Zweig was increasingly emerging as a writer of stature, but this did not prevent him from simultaneously exploring many issues relating to Judaism and Zionism that he worked through and clarified during an intense correspondence with Buber as well as contributions to the most prestigious publications of the German Zionist movement, namely Buber's "Der Jude" or "Jüdische Rundschau," the official organ of German Zionism, on which he worked from 1924 and also edited. "Freie Zionistische Blätter," "Freistatt," or "Das Jüdische Echo," on the other hand, were instruments of information and debate where the writer was able to follow events in Palestine and take part in discussions relating to the settlement of that land. Zweig now seemed to feel the need to combine spiritual Zionism with a down-to-earth Zionism based on action. This need became more pressing in the aftermath of the Balfour Declaration (1917) that had increasingly encouraged and stepped up the "aliyah," namely the ascent or return of Jews to Palestine. This union of thought and action emerged in an exchange of letters with Buber who, together with Landauer, continued to show him the way. Zweig did not conceal the nature of the difficulties and problems relating to the building of Palestine, which he passionately supported and advocated, and the obstacles in the way of the new community that was to be born there. He addressed the thorny issues with the strength and support of the spirituality imbued in him through Judaism and Zionism. In a letter to Buber dating from February 1918, he pragmatically stated that industrialization and productive capital could not be left out of the Country but nevertheless added that if work on the new man met with hostility, the only way to combat this would be youth education in groups that would be small in size but numerous throughout the territory.[10] A few months later he admitted, again in a letter to Buber, the expectations he had vested in *Ostjuden*, but also the difficulties of the Zionist undertaking, which proposed a radical change in Jews that was not destined to take place in an empty land: I have "boundless faith in the children of eastern Jews, I love them and I find them wonderful, and I have faith in a Land I have never seen. We wish to create a new type of farmers, but we do not know if the Jews will like it or if the country, which is in the hands of the Arabs, will permit it."[11] This statement makes clear the extent to which the author admitted to himself the scope of the concrete problems linked to the achievement of the Zionist utopia and was well aware of the gap between utopia and reality, and the imbalances that would necessarily arise during the course of the "realization." The letter closed with a hopeful sigh. Things are not going our way, but the Jews have pinned their hopes on us and on our promise and the population of the land is waiting for something to happen after twenty years of promises, wrote Zweig.[12] "my hope, the children, the country, our pure

yearning, the secret, strong spirit of Judaism"[13] Children and young people were therefore magic keywords for Zweig's Zionist undertaking: "Here youth triumphs," he had written with regard to the young Palestine and its young pioneers.[14] The other keyword is the yearning for spirituality, the secret and underground spirit of Judaism that Zweig never questioned, even in the moments of disappointment that were to come. In another exchange of correspondence, Zweig clarified to himself and Buber the meaning of national momentum, Jewish nationalism, a point that, as we shall see, was to become crucial to the writer's thoughts once he had arrived in Palestine. While he believed that the national momentum was something spontaneous and organic that could not be planned, he explored the subject and clarified its nature: "As long as we build for the Jews, with the Jews, a community in which man can unleash the best forces of his humanity with a purity that is only possible in this time and on the earth, we create something that becomes national. Our nationalism is surely based on a present and substantial specificity, but will not be supported by violence or proselytised. This is an idea, that of representing Jewish man in all his purity . . . we have a natural passion for the spirit and our underlining tendency is an obligation to what is ethical—this dominates our history."[15] Zweig's nationalism was therefore humanist and ethical, in the wake of the best German Zionism.[16] As he went on to clarify: "Jewish nationalism is socialist. . . . We act in a *revolutionary* way, giving land to the Jews, and not in a nationalist reactionary manner."[17] Following his meeting with the *Ostjuden* people at the eastern front and the deepening of Landauer's religious socialism, the bourgeois Zionism of the Klopfers turned into socialist Zionism during and after the war. While the writer continued to be fascinated by eastern Jews and their spirituality, he was aware of their lack of political ability, their inertia and passivity: "I can see the political inability of these men,"[18] he admitted to Buber in November 1918 and a few days later he returned to the subject, complaining of the fragmented structure of eastern Judaism, which caused their inability to organize themselves and act.[19] Zweig would return to this subject from another angle, as we shall see, once he arrived in Palestine.

He also continued to be well aware of the inevitable conflicts within the Jewish world that building the land from a Zionist viewpoint would bring with it since in a letter to Buber from Kowno written as early as 1917 he stated: "The real Zionist battles will begin only after the war. The *Golus*[20] will go to Palestine and we will have to be very careful to discover its masks, including those of orthodoxy hostile to culture, which will oppose the great European cultural values that we wish to take with us because they are non-Jewish."[21] These European values would turn out to be decisive in his subsequent disappointment about Jewish life in Palestine, which he believed to be guilty of ignoring the values of German and more generally European culture and passing over them in silence.

In 1924, Zweig therefore attempted to give a face to the new Canaan to the point that he developed a true visionary project that was also destined, as we shall see, not to hold up to the test of time.

This took the form of *Das Neue Kanaan* in which Zweig summarized the great themes of Zionism that until then had involved him in debate over the building of Palestine and traced out a Zionist and socialist utopia against the backdrop of the re-Mediterreanization of Jews arriving in the new Canaan. "A work of fiction,"[22] he wrote as a comment on his own writing, just as limitless as fiction, not reality, can be. "A book about longing,"[23] "German word of a German Jew,"[24] in which Zweig imagined and proposed the rebirth of Jews, destined in a different climate and at a different time, under changed conditions of sky and land, to become new men, to be reborn to a new and higher life and living community in the Mediterranean place where origin and future converged. "No one today can imagine what the ancient land will bring out of the Jew" [25] who arrives in Canaan "from the great barracks of Europe" with his impetuous and Dionysian yearning for freedom, the Mediterranean freedom of Canaan,[26] freedom from the constrictions of urban life lived out in western metropolies, freedom from the yoke, free "like an animal, a tree in the wind, a foaming wave."[27] "Freedom of sex, freedom from the law, freedom from state and society and freedom from his own inhibitions"[28] announced Zweig. The Jew who became bourgeois between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,[29] will give rise to new forms of life when in contact with the new land and among new men, which also entails a different division of labor and its fruits.[30] This was not, however, due to take place in accordance with the Marxist formula alone,[31] because the writer observed, "already today in Palestine, in Jewish Palestine, that is in Eretz Yisrael, there are many different forms of labour, . . . there is the small *kwuza* (Communist community, *Genossenschaft*), which shares all its profit . . . , or the *Moschaw*, made up of individual families,"[32] where land and labor are pooled. These forms of ownership, living, and community are different from one another yet guarantee "the fullness of existence." They are the *chalutzim*, pioneers, building a new Jewish humanity designed to ensure their labor does not become an end in itself,[33] in other words does not become a support for military nationalism, for legions,[34] but instead can wed the old, the Torah, to the new, to the fulfillment of Zionist ideals, which Zweig believed also had to involve a "new socialism."[35] All of this could come about when the Jew returned to the old new land, but it could not be taken for granted: some very specific conditions had to be met: "THE JEWISH NATIONAL HOME CAN BE BUILT ONLY IN PALESTINE AND ONLY WITH THE CONSENT OF THE ARABS OF PALESTINE,"[36] the writer warned. As it may well be imagined, this point was destined to become crucial once they were established in the Land. This may have been one of the reasons that Zweig essentially looked on Britain and its mandate with good will—an attitude that he would maintain even once he had arrived in

Palestine—defining it a "marvellous nurse, a nanny for adult people,"[37] in other words guaranteeing the rights of both peoples. And if the spirit of the west was bound to arrive in the new land, as he had already said, it would have to be adjusted and mitigated by the spirit of the eastern Jews. We will have occasion to recall these words, once we reach the point when the writer arrived in Palestine. For now, this was what Zweig decreed from his desk near the Schlachtensee in Berlin. Surrounded by the frenetic pace of the metropolis, with Nordic pines behind him, far from Canaan, he could let himself dream and yearn for an imaginary home, a place where he could continuously project his desires, a land of palm trees, an eternal, legendary, Dionysian East, "the home of all living beings."[38]

Zweig hardly mentioned going to Palestine himself and if he did, it was uncertain, hesitant, somewhere in the future, maybe something others would do, aimed at a generation of offspring who were less involved in the catastrophe but also less tied to the cultural values of the old continent of Europe. In 1916, Zweig wrote to Buber from the Kowno front: "We will stay in Germany another two years and then we will go on a pilgrimage to the east."[39] Shortly afterwards, his wife Beatrice wrote to Weyl: "We are Jews and we are also German. After the war, we want to try and see if we can go all out for Palestine, if we can live there" and she concluded, significantly: "I believe that the answer is more no than yes, because it is a young land without any culture."[40] Youth, children, buzzwords designed to appeal, as we said, but only to a certain point: "Palestine is fine," Zweig admitted in 1931 to Helene, "only for our young men and women."[41] "We set our sights on Palestine," he wrote from his French exile in Sanary Sur Mer in August 1933, "and we are thinking about taking our youngsters there in mid-September."[42] It is nevertheless true that his enthusiasm for building the Land, after his hymn of love dedicated to it in *Das neue Kanaan*, was destined to be toned down from the second half of the 1920s. It may have been Zweig's enthusiasm for Freud and psychoanalysis— a true falling-in-love and apprenticeship—his renewed interest for the phenomenon of anti-Semitism, which he now intended to address using the new tools of psychoanalysis and his growing literary success, which confirmed him as one of the most important German writers of his generation; whatever the reason, his Zionist passion waned despite the dark clouds gathering over Germany and its Jews. And so, in 1928, when he reprinted his famous works *Ostjüdisches Antlitz* and *Das neue Kanaan*, Zweig was able to write in an afterword that these two books had helped him recover from despair in the wake of the war. It is no little thing, but it is different from what Zweig had suggested previously. While *Ostjüdisches Antlitz* now stood as a testament to a world that no longer existed, Palestine, new Canaan and its construction, he said, have hardly impinged on us over the last four years.[43] When we think of Palestine, Zweig now wrote, our thoughts go out to those who, over and above the Jewish

national revival, brought their struggle for labor and the socialist labor effort that transforms man.[44] The author wrote that the Jewish question was nowadays seen as part of the larger question of humanity, in which he hoped that currents of solidarity and not of violence would prevail: the prevalence of solidarity and bonds would determine the solution of the Jewish question, whose fate was related to the great tide of humanity toward the left,[45] toward socialism. These words clearly describe an international political approach that was increasingly left-leaning, subsequently destined to intensify and radicalize in Palestine, as we shall see, particularly in the years of World War II.

It is hardly surprising that when Zweig decided to visit Palestine on a kind of journey that was an approach, a recognition but also an initiation, he struggled to feel himself in the Palestine he had cherished for so long: "It is difficult to feel who you are in Palestine, a situation that is objectively too clear,"[46] he noted in his travel diary on 18 February 1932. He did not recognize it: what he had before him was only reality, too real, too clear, distinct, unfurled without mystery and without possible projections of longing. This may have been one of the first tentative glimmers of the alienation that was destined to grow over time. The journey that the writer and his wife Beatrice went on from 3 February to 6 April 1932, visiting Egypt, Syria, and finally Palestine, was one of reconnaissance, a quick survey of the east. In Palestine, he was the guest of his friend Hermann Struck, on Mount Carmel, on whose slopes lies Haifa, a landscape of great natural beauty that the writer would choose as a home the next time he stayed in Palestine. Then, aided by the fine, limpid spring weather, he visited the length and breadth of Palestine. Not merely Haifa, but also Akko, Degania, Safed, the Dead Sea, Bethlehem, Herzlia, Tiberias, Tel Aviv, and naturally Jerusalem, with the remains of the Temple: "All unforgettable,"[47] he noted in his travel diary. It seems to have been a pleasant interlude, full of meetings with Jewish and German intellectuals who had emigrated there, with Ernst Simon, Dr. and Mrs. Ticho, the Krakauers; a journey into a wealth of positive impressions of places visited and people met, as is also evident from the interview that Zweig gave in Tel Aviv at the end of March to a Palestinian correspondent of "Jüdische Rundschau." "My general impression is strong and positive,"[48] he admired the landscape, he commented that the economic drive was making itself felt everywhere. It seemed to him that the various cities—Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa—were competing in the work of building the Land and everywhere he had the impression that things were on the rise. He also greatly appreciated the Hebrew language—Zweig managed to get by in the holy language, but he certainly did not speak and could not read modern Hebrew, a language full of neologisms.[49] We must bear this appreciation in mind because his problems with the language were to be, as we shall see, a leading cause of his isolation, which was psychological and political as well as

linguistic or cultural. It meant that he did not feel at home in Palestine once he settled there permanently.

"Hebrew is the glue," the writer observed for now, "holding together the different parts of the new Judaism, although the effects of the linguistic renaissance will come to be seen in future generations."[50] He also noticed a disconnection between people and between the various national groups, between Jews, Arabs, and British, and he felt that it was necessary to build social bonds. One important passage concerned "the naive and uncritical nationalism of both sides,"[51] that he perceived in this land under construction, nationalism that the British could not fight, given their interests. "The Palestinians must find themselves on their own,"[52] commented the writer. He warned that the Jews would also have to address the economic situation as a whole in Palestine, because the solutions could not be solely Jewish. "It is not necessary to go into detail about the *kvutzot*, the *Moshavot* and the settlements. Every tourist is left with the impression that exemplary results are being achieved despite the serious concerns."[53] Any problems we could bring up fade into the background when compared to "the experience of what this Land inspires in people."[54] His joyous experience of Purim in Tel Aviv was very positive and strong: Zweig praised "the indescribably civilised festivities,"[55] an experience that became for him, as it had for Schüler, paradigmatic of a possible human coexistence in Palestine, of a human brotherhood in Eretz Yisrael. Arabs and Jews seemed to him to live alongside one another there and live with joy, without problems of any kind.

"What a mistake it was to want to come back here! . . . Why didn't I stay down there, in the heroic landscape of Galilee or the sea of Tel Aviv or the Dead Sea?,"[56] Zweig wrote to Freud, once he was back in Berlin after his journey to Palestine. His enthusiasm for the Land seemed now to have eclipsed his love for Germany and Europe, and Zweig set out to reap the fruits of his stay in literary form in the novel *De Vriendt kehrt heim* (*De Vriendt goes home*). He conceived the book in Palestine but wrote or rather dictated it in Berlin in the space of a couple of months and it was sent to be printed in November 1932. It was the writer's last book to be published in Germany.[57] It was, however, a provocative book, in which Theisohn rightly saw the end of the great Zionist narrative that had begun with Herzl's *The Jewish State*.[58] Zweig drew inspiration from the dramatic and mysterious murder in 1924 of the Dutch Jewish jurist, writer, and journalist Jacob de Haan, an event he had already evoked tragically in *Das Neue Kanaan*.[59] De Haan was from an orthodox family and emigrated to Palestine in 1918 inspired by Zionism. He was then disappointed by both religious and secular Zionism and became a member of AgudatIsrael, an ultra-Orthodox and anti-Zionist group.[60] After adopting this stance, de Haan also campaigned against the creation of Jewish national institutions and sent anti-Zionist representations to the British authorities. The indignation that this aroused among the

Jewish population of Palestine, the Yishuv, grew still more when it emerged that he was involved in a homosexual relationship with a young Arab boy and de Haan was regarded as a traitor. On 30 June 1924, he was killed by a gunshot, but the murderer managed to flee to safety. He was long believed to have been killed by the young Arab boy's family.

Zweig had long been fascinated by the ambiguous and controversial figure of de Haan, who was a kind of doubly unspoken of and unspeakable character, poised between exile and return, religious and profane, Zionist and anti-Zionist, of uncertain sexual identity whose fate represented, as no other, the crisis of Zionism, as Theisohn observed,[61] to the point that de Haan could be considered "abnormal."[62] If Zionism partly represented an attempt to build an ego, the character of de Haan thus represented the return of the repressed, the irreducible and metamorphic Id.[63]

When Zweig arrived in Palestine, he learned the whole truth: the murder was not the work of Arabs but of a young militant Zionist in the Haganah[64] who killed de Haan to prevent him from pursuing his "saboteur" actions against the Yishuv. In the novel, Zweig recounted the final dramatic months of de Vriendt—the de Haan character in the novel—and his tragic end as the writer imagined it: he was murdered by a young Polish Jew who was a recent immigrant. Zweig moved the action to July 1929, however, during the bloody riots between Arabs and Jews around the issue of rights over the Western Wall. In the novel, the Arab riots and uprisings are depicted as being somehow related to the killing of de Haan, who was a known friend of the Arabs.

The novel received a very chilly welcome in Palestine—it would not be published in Hebrew until 1991—because it was considered inappropriate to take a murder that had occurred years earlier and bring it back to public attention, above all attributing it to the Jews, while it was still possible to believe that the Arabs had killed de Haan.[65] Not that Zweig assumed an anti-Zionist or pro-Arab stance in the novel. Instead he ably emphasized the arguments of Zionism and even though he certainly did not applaud the killing of de Vriendt, he depicted the work of building Palestine in a positive light and defined the violence unleashed by the Arabs in the 1929 riots as nothing less than pogroms, not anti-imperialist struggles: pogroms that the Jews on this occasion responded to by defending themselves, thus arousing the writer's admiration. Zweig naturally wished to distance himself from the decline of the two forms of nationalism, while his sympathies, to all intents and purposes, lay with his character, Irmin, a British Secret Service agent from whose perspective the story is told. This perspective is equidistant to and in any event external to the facts and—most importantly—external to the Yishuv. The thing that put the author in a critical light was his very choice of theme, which was actually full of the unspoken and the unspeakable and, among other things, emphasized the impossibility of a radical new beginning,

a rebirth in the land of the fathers or, quite simply, the birth of a new man. Zweig was also aware that the novel would not be well received by the Yishuv and if the truth be told admitted to Freud: "The book will annoy Jews and non-Jews, because it condemns nationalism and political assassination even among the Jews."[66] *De Vriendt kehrt heim* could not therefore be considered a good calling card in Palestine or offer its author the consensus and recognition by the Yishuv that he, as we shall see, was expecting.

After Hitler came to power on 13 March 1933, Zweig reluctantly left Germany. Again on 1 March, he noted in his diary: "I do not want to leave."[67] This statement is not surprising. The same sentiment was generally felt by most German Jews including the élite of German Zionism who were strongly linked, in spite of everything, to the European and particularly German cultural world in which the Zionist option was rooted. On 8 May, the writer went to Sanary sur Mer in the south of France with his wife, and shortly afterwards they were joined by their children Adam and Michael. During this first stage of exile, the writer found himself in the company of other intellectuals including Heinrich and Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Franz Werfel, Alfred Kerr, and above all Lion Feuchtwanger, with whom Zweig would enjoy a copious correspondence in the following years, which lasted until the death of his friend in 1958.

Here in the south of France, Zweig wished to leave one last, impassioned record of the cultural and historical significance of German Jewry, which was the world he inhabited. He entitled it *Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit*, an extension and reworking of a text he had published in 1927, *Juden auf der deutschen Bühne*. Zweig offered two alternatives: Socialism, but not Marxist, and Zionism, which was more of a reasonable way out.[68] Zweig ultimately summarized his arguments with regard to Zionism as follows: every people, every group of men increases the value of humanity through their presence. The endurance of all humankind, he explained, is also assured when the people are on their own soil, not subject to foreign rule, with their own language. Zweig argued that the goal of Zionism was to guarantee Jewish productivity for the future and this purpose required territory and a Jewish language to overcome the multiplicity of mother tongues.[69] "Palestine, this romantic utopia . . . is the only way forward to the future,"[70] he concluded. As we know, the writer nevertheless feared the escalation of Jewish nationalism, which in his view was not at all the same thing as Zionism but rather its negation, and even from these pages—which were his last on the matter written in old Europe, in the process of exodus—he warned: "And we ourselves, when we come face-to-face with the Arabs, will be able to find out . . . if we are free of the epidemic that afflicts others."[71] Zweig also believed, as did a large part of the German Zionist élite and also, more relevantly, the authors examined in this book, with the possible exception of Tergit, that the relationship with the Arabs should have been a litmus test of

the purity of the Jewish ideal of Zionism, immune from the worst forms of nationalism, hatred, and human exploitation. With an emphasis that often accompanied his writings, he concluded by taking a broader view: "We wish to continue to do our duty, fighting for the world's left." We should keep these words in mind when the writer, increasingly disappointed by his Zionist experience in Palestine, began to become increasingly active for the "world's left," hence engaged in a struggle against barbarism and Nazi fascism.

At the beginning of November 1933, Zweig began his final preparations for the great exodus and joined his family who were already awaiting him in Palestine. While he was aware of Palestine's contrasts, exacerbated, he would say, by the assassination in Tel Aviv of one of the most representative leaders of Labour Zionism, Chaim Arlosoroff, in June 1933,[72] the writer still managed to muster up some enthusiasm, as is evident from a letter written shortly before leaving, on 9 November, to Lily Offenstadt, his secretary. His optimism was nevertheless full of reservations: "I am full of enthusiasm and I am 100% for going over there—despite all the difficulties. The only thing is that my enthusiasm is aimed at building a courageous society, not a self-congratulating nationalism."[73] This enthusiasm was, as we shall see, drastically toned down during his stay in Palestine, which lasted for fifteen years.

The academic Adi Gordon was therefore quite right to ask the real question, which has no simple answer, when he wondered why Zweig chose Palestine, of all places.[74] He had been a Zionist for more than twenty years, it is true, but he was equally if not more strongly attached to Germany, the German culture, and European culture in general. His Zionism had also been waning for some years now in favor of his political commitment to the "left." Moreover, as we know, Zweig was also well aware—even more so after his stay in 1932—of the present difficulties and obstacles that made it, if not impossible, certainly difficult to achieve a Zionist utopia, particularly with regard to building a new man and a new community. This very topic, which was chosen for his first commentary on Palestine, the novel *De Vriendt kehrt heim,* the literary outcome of his first voyage of discovery, left no doubts in that regard. The writer himself was also in no doubt because, as he admitted to Freud, writing the novel had forced him to "tread the long road of disillusionment as far as I could—even more than was good for me."[75] As early as December 1933, when he set sail for Eretz Yisrael, the writer, like the protagonist of his second Palestinian novel, the psychiatrist Richard Karthaus, was effectively able to assert that *Traum ist teuer* (1962), or the price of dreaming is high. As he explained to two immigrants whom he met on the ship: we could choose between the Soviet Union and Eretz Yisrael. We chose Eretz Yisrael.[76]

On 21 December 1933, Zweig arrived in the port of Jaffa. After spending a few days in Tel Aviv, he settled with his family on Mount Carmel, and was

able to admire the magnificent bay of Haifa at his feet. His welcome by public opinion was rather lukewarm. "Haaretz," the biggest Jewish newspaper, wrote: "The famous German Jewish writer Arnold Zweig has arrived in our land to settle here. His family has been here for several months." The report in "Davar," the mouthpiece of the workers' union (Histadrut) was even more succint.[77]

Zweig's final entry in his diary for the year contains the laconic, significant words: "In Palestine. Stranger in a strange land."[78] Leaving aside, for the moment, his immediate feeling of foreignness, which is among the most obvious and understandable feelings of an expatriate, the difficulties that Zweig complained of were not merely practical, as we could be led to believe by the first part of a letter written to his friend and "father" Freud, one month after his arrival. Here the writer listed a series of prosaic hardships: "Once the central heating did not work, once the kerosene stove stank, once rain came in through the door . . . and when the wind changed, it came in through the window."[79] And after adding explanations about the malfunctioning heating, he added: "You will find, dear father Freud, that I devote too many lines to the heating. But these matters of practical life, the creaking operation of the machine of civilisation is the main problem in this land. We are not willing to give up our standard of living and the land is not up to it. . . . As for work, I have not managed to do anything."[80] These difficulties may have been prosaic, but they put a stop to more than everyday life. Not being able to work was not a good omen for a writer who was prone to writer's block. The true impact of the shock he had experienced is clear from a statement a few lines further down: "I no longer care about the 'land of my Fathers.' Nor do I have any Zionist illusions. I am facing the need to live here among the Jews without enthusiasm, without embellishment and even without irony. . . . Our clever, reasonable sons, each in his own settlement or children's village, are helping to make it easier for us to adapt here. The only thing that has dissolved is enthusiasm, based on wishful thinking, and I will not shed a tear over this."[81] When he came into contact with the reality of the Land, the writer's Zionism evaporated, his Zionist illusions failed him and his enthusiasm was replaced by the sober realization that he needed to "live among the Jews." This statement seems to sweep away the writer's Zionist past with a single pen stroke. Admittedly a 360-degree turn, but the thing that has changed is Palestine, explained the writer in a letter sent during the same period: the idealism you could still feel in Palestine two years ago has vanished: many people have had to come here through necessity and not out of love,[82] he explained. Palestine's primitiveness and difficulties therefore made themselves felt in a more oppressive way. While he and his wife made many obvious assumptions about many matters concerning their external standards of living, which would have been unimaginable in Eretz Yisrael, Zweig concluded that things could not be any other way because taking a

land that had been completely devastated to the point it had achieved today had meant a heroic effort.[83] In an interview shortly after, he would say on the subject of aesthetics, art, and technology, namely civilization, the return of people who are accustomed to a high standard is a blessing for Palestine. If civilization is found wanting, this is due to the total inability of eastern Jews in this area.[84] Zweig therefore began to distance himself from the eastern Jews who, long ago, he had viewed with deep admiration, although even then he had noticed in them not only a certain political and organizational incompetence, but in particular an obvious lack of any aesthetic education for taste, beauty, and music,[85] which the writer now more than ever felt were non-negotiable values. In short, the intellectual, cultured, and sophisticated Zweig was no longer willing to sacrifice the *Bildung* that he had known and loved and had himself helped to shape in Europe and Germany. He was unwilling to give up either *Kultur* or *Zivilisation*: "There is nothing more important than improving your conditions," civilized living conditions, he would write in an article for the "Palestine Post," in December 1935.[86] And he was more than ever unwilling to sacrifice his lifestyle at the altar of building a Zionism that in his eyes was increasingly proving to be nationalistic, provincial, heavily influenced by the majority eastern-Jewish faction of the Yishuv. His disappointment did not even spare the Zionist leaders he had once revered, whom he said were, "now settled in the comfort of European civilisation and come here to visit, like Weizmann or our friend Goldmann,[87] or not at all, like the more intransigent Buber and Klatzkin."[88] He felt he had been sent forward by those who preached Eretz Yisrael but then remained well anchored to European comforts and culture. We will see later how his rift with Buber, the mentor and friend of his youth, was destined to deepen.

These early yet significant impressions therefore contain less light and more shade as he confirmed his fears, overshadowed in his home country, that Palestine was a land without culture, better suited to young people. The thing that appears not to have survived the impact with Palestine and the true nature of the Yishuv, even though Zweig acknowledged their heroism, is nothing less than the Zionist project, which he now defined as an "illusion." Apart from anything else, these unequivocal admissions were made to someone, like Freud, who was certainly able to understand them and not merely because he was not a Zionist, words that were written without any resentment or feeling, at least according to the writer. Many people, he wrote, came out of necessity, not out of love. For Zweig too, the reason no longer appeared to be love for Palestine but the "need to live among the Jews." Going back to the question asked by Adi Gordon, was not "necessity" a key to interpreting his reason for staying on in Palestine, or even choosing it in the first place?

The thing that endured was his admiration for the beauty of the Country, as had already been borne out by long passages on this subject in *De Vriendt kehrt heim*. "Mount Carmel," he wrote to Freud, "is still a magnificent and

desolate landscape, almost Scottish, situated between the bay and the open sea,"[89] and a few months later: "I travelled around the country for 10 days with Dita,[90] the Land is so beautiful at the moment,"[91] and again: "mimosas, lemons and carpets of mountain flowers are blooming here."[92] When he announced to Freud that he was going to start psychoanalytical therapy, for which he had high hopes, he commented: "And then I can be really happy and enjoy the wonderful, sunny climate of Mount Carmel."[93] "Everywhere," he wrote, "nature offsets the disappointments that men never tire of producing."[94] Yet his prevailing sentiment was alienation, uprooting. Six months after his arrival, he wrote to Freud: "Tonight I have been booked to give a lecture: the psychological consequences of being uprooted."[95] This topic was to resurface, as we shall see, in a subsequent polemical complaint about his living conditions in the Land. He nevertheless managed to return to work on his novel *Erziehung vor Verdun*, which he completed in 1934, to attend to a number of projects, including a novel on Nietzsche that never came to anything, and to write a play entitled *Bonaparte in Jaffa* that he sent to Habimah, the Jewish theater of Tel Aviv, in the hope that it would be performed.

The writer, it is true, lived as though he were in Germany, wrote as though he were in Germany and was consoled by his many German Jewish neighbors on Mount Carmel.[96] Yet he was saddened by the fact that he was disregarded by the Yishuv and its cultural institutions, which do not seem to have taken due account of his presence in Palestine. Not even one of his plays was performed in Palestine, while only two of his novels *Der Streit um den Sergeanten Grisha* (1928) and *Das Beil von Wandsbeck* (1943) and his story *Der Spiegel des großen Kaisers* (1926 published in German, 1947 published in Hebrew), would be translated into Hebrew during his stay.[97] Overall, the writer lived out his time in Palestine with the impression of being ignored: "Apart from a few exceptions, the Land behaves as if I were not here at all," he noted in a letter dated November 1935.[98] He certainly expected more, despite his gaffe in publishing *De Vriendt kehrt heim*. "Here I am very isolated," he admitted to Rudolf Olden in a letter dated May 1935: "Spiritual life in Palestine is completely swallowed up by building and the Jewish perspective on matters and my impatience with everything that is a facade which, I admit, borders on injustice, makes it doubly difficult for me to adhere to the literature here and in University circles. The main reason I am here, without wavering and turning back, is to get hold of a Palestinian passport before my German one expires so that I can be spared any difficulties. We have to stay in Palestine for two years to achieve this."[99] It is tempting to say that these were reasons of convenience, perhaps dictated by discouragement, but reasons that the writer considered valid or necessary, during what he described as a "period of decluttering."[100] These reasons were, however, not shared from the viewpoint of the Yishuv, as we shall see from the controversy that subsequently focused precisely on the nature of the

writer's residency in the Land. Together with the Zionist German Jewish élite who had emigrated to Palestine—who accepted integration while maintaining their specific nature[101]—they could not forgive his failure to learn Hebrew, the language of the Yishuv. As we may recall, a few years earlier Zweig himself had hailed the Hebrew revival as a "glue" holding the population together. Once the writer had moved permanently to Eretz Yisrael, however, he continued to speak and write in German, a language that was now definitely compromised for Palestine, where it was considered the language of Nazi Germany. Palestine also had a history of a veritable linguistic battle that had led to German ultimately having been forced to surrender to Hebrew as the language of education in schools.[102] The Germans were also now persecuting the Jews and the Jews in Palestine could not possibly look kindly on people like Zweig, who insisted on remaining loyal to that people even if only in its language and culture. Zweig, for his part, had somehow expected to interact on the public stage, in the political and cultural arena of the Land, to be able to communicate, even though he was not even able to follow the news in the newspapers and had to resort to the few information sheets written in German or English.

"I had imagined myself in the evening, after work, standing with my pipe on the roadside and being able to talk to the workers. I never dreamed that the Hebrew language would represent such a barrier," he confided to the writer Schalom Ben Chorin, who also arrived in Palestine from Germany in 1935.[103] A true relationship with the Land was, however, never granted him or possible. Zweig, who had long been a sympathizer of Hapoel Hatzair, the non-Marxist workers' party, could no longer identify with the socialist and left-leaning stances within Zionism: "I took part in a big political demonstration against the war with the workers of the left," he recounted to Freud in September 1935, "and they tried to keep up the nationalist fiction by translating my speech into ivrit[104] as if they had not understood me when I spoke in German—as though everyone did not speak Yiddish at home. And all this with the left-wing Poale Zion,[105] who are attacked as internationalists by the other 'more right-wing' Social Democrats. So I am beginning to think about leaving, but I will need a little longer."[106] He felt—and was—cut off; he had cut himself off. "I have been here for nearly two years," he wrote to Freud, "and I can say that I have chosen well for Dita, the children and work, but my personal sphere of action amounts to zero from a political and cultural viewpoint. People want their Hebrew and I cannot give it to them."[107] He was not now lacking in literary creativity—Zweig was engaged in many literary projects—but rather some reflection of this in the Land. And Zweig was also a great narcissist. It was out of the question for him to learn Hebrew, his sight was severely impaired and learning the Hebrew language was impossible for this reason as well. Zweig was also a writer who felt at home with the German language and culture: "Despite my Zionist ideas," he confided to

Helene Weyl in a letter of 1934, "I was at home with the German spirit and on German soil."[108] While he had felt himself to be "also" Jewish among the Germans, now he was among the Jews he felt especially German, a German writer: "I am a German writer and a German European, and this awareness has consequences," and added, disheartened: "But where can I live if not here?"[109] Yet again he had come up against necessity. And while he invited Freud to the Land,[110] he nevertheless confessed to him—by now more than one and a half years had passed since his arrival because the date was now September 1935—that he realized "with detachment, that I do not belong to this place. After twenty years of Zionism, this is of course hard to believe. Not that I am particularly disappointed, because we are doing quite well here. But what brought us here was all wrong."[111] A statement that left no doubts: Zweig felt himself to be a foreigner in Palestine. In Germany, at a distance, he had imagined a different life, but now he was here among the Jews, he did not feel any sense of belonging. His belonging was broader, he emphasized. The decisive thing for him was not the origin, but the spirit, he said in a letter dated 1943 to Feuchtwanger.[112] It was not merely his foreignness that stood out: the fact that he asserted that everything that led him to Palestine was wrong is much more significant. He no longer identified with the arguments for Zionism. Before he had spoken of "illusion," now he went further: it was wrong, what he had believed in as a Zionist was a mistake or rather a deception, or a self-deception. He came to the point of questioning and discrediting the teachers and thinkers who had inspired him in Germany. In a letter, written also in September 1935, to Tergit, who was also, as we have seen, highly critical of Palestine as well as cultural Zionism, the writer admitted: "What this newspaper[113] says is quite unimportant and I am only ashamed of a few sentences in the *Bilanz*, which I will withdraw when the time is right. You must also consider that Herr Herzl and Herr Nordau[114] were Hungarian Jews, Herr Doktor Buber of Lemberg, Herr Doktor Klatzkin[115] of Lublin and that the German Jews with Herr Blumenfeld and Herr Krojanker[116] have not provided spiritual ornaments and heroes. We German Jews can only reproach ourselves for the fact that we allowed ourselves to be fooled by all these "achievers."[117] The eastern Jews, among whom Zweig also numbered Herzl, Nordau, Klatzkin, and above all Buber—the teacher from whom Zweig now distanced himself by referring to him with ironic detachment as "Herr Doktor Buber"—all these "achievers" (Buber's magic word was *Verwirklichung*, realization) had fooled the German Jews, and Zweig himself.

If he wrote in this way, it was because in Palestine he had become aware of the huge cultural gulf that separated the German Jews from the *Ostjuden*. While at one time he had admired and mythologized the eastern Jews, relying on their young people to build the new Canaan, Zweig now criticized the dominant role they had assumed in the Yishuv. They had arrived in great numbers from Poland and Russia during the 1920s and even earlier and now

made up the majority of Jews in Palestine. It was their supremacy that had given the land its characteristic, insular, ghetto-like imprint and atmosphere.[118] Apart from this, Zweig criticized the nationalist and chauvinist characteristics typical of the Zionist leadership. This characteristic was very far from the humanist and socialist Zionist ideals that he held dear. The outcome of all this was very far, too far, from how Zweig had imagined Eretz Yisrael years earlier in Germany and his conception of the relationship between the western and eastern spirit in Palestine: "The gap between Europe and the east must shrink," he wrote, "and the Hebrew University must create a modern European milieu, conveying a western spirit in its teaching methods and materials. Its exhibitions, theatres and particularly concerts must represent the best and the newest creations of Europe for every guest who desires it."[119] There was no trace in the Land of any of this, not least because of the prevalence of the *ostjüdisch* mentality that the writer had imagined at one time to be a valuable corrective to "the dispersive spirit of the west."[120] The collision between utopia and reality was too violent, and the writer's Zionism had been broken by it: "Zionism is a disease that can only be cured in Palestine," he revealed to Ben Chorin.[121] The thing that Zweig really could not forgive the Eretz Yisrael Zionist leadership for was having swept away the spirit of Utopia, reducing Zionism to a national chauvinist movement, like all other forms of nationalism. While it is true that he struggled to recognize himself in this leadership, we also know that, unlike him, other members of the German Zionist élite in Palestine sought to adapt to the situation and come to terms with the reality of the Land, even though they felt profoundly uncomfortable.[122]

And thus the writer confessed to Freud in February 1936: "I resist my very being in Palestine. I feel as if I am in the wrong place. Restrictive conditions, made *even more so* by the Hebrew nationalism of the Jews, who will not let you print in any other language. Here I have to lead a translated existence. . . . But now what? Where can I settle, with the prospect of being able to stay for a certain length of time? My voice of reason says America. Yet my heart does not want to travel that far. I am comforted by my chameleon-like hopes that Germany will again be open in a few years and have need of me"[123] He was seriously starting to think about leaving Palestine and even going back to Germany in a few years as soon as this was possible. And he continued: "I will be able to have a Palestinian passport—within a couple of weeks. Yet I also have *little* to do with the Jewish nationality. I am Jewish, God, yes. But do I belong as a citizen to those who have ignored me since *De Vriendt*?" And he concluded: "I would like to fight only on one front, against barbarism. Perhaps I am too tired to kick out in every direction, like an old donkey."[124] As early as 1936, the writer's basic attitude to Palestine was thus taking shape: leave the Land and fight for the "world's left."

Apart from the writer's disillusionment about Zionism, he was also in a financial situation that he described as modest, if not precarious. His large and well-situated apartment on Mount Carmel, as well as his standard of living, taking into account the Palestinian context, did not suggest that he was living in prohibitive conditions—quite the contrary. It was true that his royalties, excluding those from the Soviet Union, had dried up. His life therefore seemed to shrink around him, due to the lack of a *milieu* appropriate to his habits and expectations as well as the lack of positive responses and feedback from the Yishuv and its cultural institutions. His attempts to establish "the film industry from which he could draw financial support," as he wrote to his brother Hans,[125] and work with Habimah, also seemed to have fallen by the wayside. His linguistic isolation had become psychological isolation. His condition seemed closer to that of an exile than a returnee, and in 1934 Hugo Bergmann noted: "Arnold Zweig was in my Library. It is disturbing how he lives here as an *emigrant*."[126] "There is emigration here," Zweig admitted to Feuchtwanger, a few months after his arrival in Palestine, "exactly as in other places."[127]

Zweig's fate was not confined to himself alone. A good part of this feeling of not belonging was shared by most of the German Jews who had come to Palestine because of Germany and not because of their beliefs, in other words not because they were Zionists.[128] The adjustment was difficult, not merely from the viewpoint of the climate and the harshness of the physical living conditions. The political and intellectual life, which was dominated as we said by the *Ostjuden*, meant that the "Yekkes," as the German Jews were referred to with sarcastic humor, were barely tolerated. The Yekke therefore lost out twice: as Jews who had suffered rejection by Germany and now as Germans marginalized by the Yishuv. The balance of power had been overturned compared to the situation in Germany in the early decades of the twentieth century, when eastern Jews arrived in the west, hoping to find better living conditions and acceptance if not welcome from the German Jews.[129] Now, in Palestine, the eastern Jews were in the majority and felt superior to the inexperienced German Jews who were not accustomed to the situation and found it difficult to adapt. Now the eastern Jews could look down on them.

Difficulties and contradictions, but also "disruptions,"[130] that the German Jews, who were mostly middle-class and now arriving in the Land, were forced to face. Many shadows and little light: "Destructive forces and constructive forces, negative and positive, old and new,"[131] which the author reported on and examined in articles that came out between 1935 and 1936 in the "Palestine Post," the official English-language mouthpiece of the Jewish Agency.[132] Here the author emphasized the difference between what came before—Germany—and what came after—Palestine; between life in Germany and life in the Land. He described the upheaval in his habits, lifestyle, and

profession that had come about as a result of coming to live in the Land, the difficulties and challenges of integrating into another, harsh reality, for women and men, the middle class and housewives, clerks and lawyers, doctors and tailors who were now effectively having to undergo the loss of their class and reinvent a new life for themselves.

The question of language, which was closely related to *Bildung*, was therefore revealed to be crucial in determining the sense of alienation that German Jews felt in the Yishuv. Hebrew was not a language that you could learn overnight and they were not willing to give up German, their mother tongue, at best tolerating English as a second language. But Hebrew was tough to learn, even culturally and psychologically. Opting for ivrit meant cutting yourself off from the rest of the world, being Jews alone, not "also" Jewish. In order to accept Hebrew, you also needed to have a strong desire for integration, to not consider yourself a guest or passing through, but to be rooted in the culture and in the life of the Yishuv, accepting its necessarily limited horizons, renouncing *Bildung*, your humanistic heritage, universal literature and concentrating on a local and as yet unformed literature or culture that was still in its infancy. The only thing that remained alive in the Land, which was unsurprising because, as Zweig said, it knew no linguistic barriers, was musical tradition, which "has found a new home here, a shelter to keep out barbarism."[133] For Zweig, accepting Hebrew meant not only giving up his identity as a writer but also his central European lifestyle of culture and economic ease, getting used to the harshness and lack of manners of the new Jewish population, who were in truth struggling with other problems that had nothing whatsoever to do with education and lifestyle, taste and manners, which were certainly lacking, as Zweig complained. He nevertheless reiterated that nothing justified a hierarchy of values between what was needed and what was mistakenly considered to be superfluous, such as culture: you could not give up *Geist* in the name of other priorities. This renunciation meant death for Zweig: "Spirit is not a luxury. Where this is lacking, life dies," he wrote in 1935 in an article that was actually in support of a Jewish theater, but a living theater, as he creatively defined it.[134] Accepting Hebrew—which the writer also observed, when walking the streets of Haifa, was suited to the climate and light of Palestine[135]—would have meant cutting himself off from his past, giving a negative assessment of his experience in the diaspora, wearing different clothes, pretending to take on another identity. All of this was not difficult, it was impossible for a German Jew such as Arnold Zweig. His links with *Bildung* and with the homeland he had only recently and reluctantly left behind him were too strong: "It almost does not matter where you are if you are not at home," he admitted to Freud.[136]

Zweig could dream of the new Palestinian Jew when he was in Germany. In Germany, Palestine was a utopia, it was otherness, the desire to be elsewhere, and this was possible because it was the fruit of imagination, or

abstraction that could be integrated into people's personal status as Germans and Jews. It is highly likely that Zweig would never have left Germany for Palestine of his own free will. It took Nazism to break his own very personal symbiosis with the German culture, but even this was not decisive in reformulating his past and his invention or construction of a new Jewish identity on Palestinian soil, a soil that was also under continual threat. In spite of the other world that surrounded him, to which he was essentially impermeable, Zweig continued to write the same things he had written in Germany in the same way: historical novels anchored to a nineteenth-century form of realism, without the reality that was so difficult for him to portray impinging on him in the least. In his journalistic activities, Zweig succeeded in addressing and accounting for the reality of the Land, its achievements and its contradictions, because this did not have any impact on his identity as a novelist, which was what the writer really saw as his role and the thing that he really cared about. His intellectual identity had not therefore been dented in any way. Quite the contrary, exile had confirmed this as the only possible and viable identity. From Palestine he now dreamed of going home, but this time to Germany.

We have already mentioned that Eretz Yisrael was under threat. The years between 1936 and 1939 were, as we know, the years of the great Arab revolt against the mandatory power and against Jewish immigration, at a crucial moment in the history of Jews from Germany and elsewhere. Being able to emigrate to Palestine meant salvation, but a mass emigration was the very thing that the Arabs were opposing on a large scale, moving on from words to deeds. These were years of turmoil and terror, when it was increasingly difficult to live and hold on to socialist ideals, which were increasingly beaten into the background by the emergency and naked defense of the Land and what had been so painstakingly built. The Arab revolt ended in the spring of 1939.[137] Immigration went on, as far as this was possible, and the Jewish population now amounted to half a million inhabitants, compared to 100,000 in the 1920s. Most of the immigrants came from Germany, but instead of finding peace and security, they arrived in a land that was at war. Zweig too was very concerned about the dramatic situation: "I am disturbed by the fact that the foundations of the reconstruction process here have been neglected even more than I first supposed and I suffer greatly at the thought of how little attention has been given to Jewish-Arab cooperation, the need for which should have appeared obvious to any reasonable person. Dreams and desires of underground power or even pre-conscious and conscious dreams prevented the essential from being done: mutual concessions within the living space,"[138] he wrote to Freud in July 1936, a few months after the start of the Arab revolt. He reacted to all this by concentrating on his literary work—in 1937 he completed *Einsetzung eines Königs*—and the correspondence that

acted as a bridge with the west and with another form of exile, thus escaping the reality of Palestine as much as possible.

Just as he had contributed to the Zionist newspapers in Germany, now as Zweig aligned himself with the politics of the popular front, he contributed to the press of antifascist exile, including "Die neue Weltbühne," "Das Neue Tagebuch," "Die Sammlung," "Internationale Literatur," "Pariser Zeitung," and "Das Wort," which came out in Moscow, as well as to the "Palestine Post." As and when he was able, he also began to leave Palestine and travel to Europe. Between 1936 and 1939, every summer he went to Europe for a few months to escape the heat—visiting Freud amongst others—and in the summer of 1939 he even travelled with his son to America, where he was greeted as part of a delegation by President Roosevelt. This tells us that Zweig's financial conditions allowed him to travel and also that his need for connections outside Palestine was now vital. His relationship with old Europe, the German world, and the West in general, which he admittedly also kept alive in his correspondence with Feuchtwanger and Freud and with his friends and family, could not in the long run be separated from his direct personal relationships, partly because his life in Palestine never succeeded in becoming warmer and more welcoming, as revealed by a feeling that is clear from an eloquently titled lecture given by the writer in 1937: "Emigration and neurosis."[139]

"The situation the Land is heading into is very bad,"[140] he confided to Feuchtwanger in 1937. The increasingly dramatic living conditions, on the one hand, and his increasing isolation, on the other, led the writer to reiterate his intention to leave Palestine forever: "We will turn our backs on Palestine for once and for all. And we will do it next spring,"[141] he announced to Freud in March 1937. And in July 1938, he also wrote the following to Freud: "Next year, we want to . . . emigrate from our poor Palestine."[142] He realized he was practically living in a state of war and he was hugely affected by the crescendo of violence, which was also perpetrated by the Jewish nationalists: "Yesterday in Jerusalem," he wrote to Freud from Mount Carmel on 16 July 1938, "a bomb was thrown into the Arab shuk. . . . Since the entire land bowed to an 18-year-old bomber—who was (unfortunately) hanged—due to cowardice in the face of Jewish nationalism, there is no doubt that this bomb was thrown by Jews. We will suffer a terrible revenge. . . . Jews who came to the land against the will of the Arabs and have been incapable of earning the goodwill of the Arabs since 1919 had one advantage: their moral stance, their passive resistance."[143] For had he not said that the relationship with the Arabs was the litmus test of the Zionist project? It seemed now that nothing could bring comfort to the writer and only a jolt of realism brought him back to the present: "A Jewish child is singing on the balcony next door so badly that I will have to stop writing because it is as irritating as a fly. He is singing a song *lichvod shabbath*,[144] in honour of the Sabbath that is beginning. Yet I

tell myself that in Vienna, Berlin and elsewhere Jewish children do not sing any more and so I am not going to allow myself to be disturbed," and he concluded with certain pride: "My Michi is going to keep watch tonight in my little car."[145] But these moments were short-lived: "I am making plans for America," he told Freud in February 1939, and continued: "I am very unhappy about being stateless yet again."[146] And in the following days he reiterated: "We must get away from here, we cannot get on financially. Palestine is expensive and I am not earning anything here."[147] While he did not explicitly mention his disillusionment with the Zionist project in his plans for expatriation it was because this was already a long-standing sentiment, as he clarified to his brother Hans in a letter of 1939: "I shelved the Eretz Yisrael fairytale back in 1934."[148] I quickly realized "that it was a wrong move because I was not making any money in this Land and I was being boycotted by the Jews.[149] No one in this land has ever raised the issue of what it would take to make it possible for me to live in Palestine."[150] Contemporary arguments, such as the financial situation—the perceived if not the real situation—and the boycotting by the Yischuv and its cultural institutions prompted him to plan his departure from the Country. With Freud, he was not, however, afraid to voice his contradictions: "Tearing ourselves away from here is still frightening for us, particularly for me. I have put down a lot of roots of sympathy here, even though only a few have borne any financial fruit. The unknown would not cause me any anxiety. If only I could leave a permanent home that it was natural to go back to."[151] Zweig therefore began to embark on a to-and-fro lifestyle, similar to that of Lasker-Schüler, perpetually going and coming back, as though it were now only possible to exist in this commuting movement, at the edges of reality, in a perpetual elsewhere. The writer would embrace this compromise solution again, albeit briefly, on the eve of his final departure. Except that for Zweig, as for Schüler, the war intervened and put an end to any real or imaginary expatriation plans and shut off any emergency exit or exodus for the time being.

In his letters, the writer indulged in very personal confessions that were not always politically correct but in articles written for the press in exile and for the "Palestine Post," his reflections on Palestine are critical but more balanced as though communicating with the outside world meant he had to establish a distance, together with all his idiosyncrasies, to achieve greater objectivity.

Thus, browsing through his correspondence on Palestine that appeared in the "Pariser Zeitung" between spring and summer 1938 inevitably provides a much more detailed and complex impression than the one that the writer subsequently defined, once he had repatriated to East Germany, as the Palestinian knot, a knot that cannot be unravelled but must be severed, like the Gordian knot.[152]

The entire political spectrum was present on the spiritual surface of this small Country, Zweig observed. Linked to European democracy through the mandate system, involved with the British Empire but part of an Arab context and itself an Arab country, Palestine shuddered under the blows inflicted on the Jews of Europe, suffered an economic crisis, was threatened by Nazism, and also experienced cultural problems and struggles within the same Jewish world. There were many difficulties to be addressed: these included the realization of a Jewish homeland under the Balfour Declaration and the Basel Programme, but in the meantime things had happened that could not then have been predicted, because the Land was not the Palestine of the Bible but the real Palestine.

Fueled by personal experience, Zweig pointed his finger at the architectural style in the Land which revealed the essential nature of a community, in his view. The new districts of Haifa, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv were an expression of anarchy, the lack of any plan. In other words they were the outcome of petit bourgeois individualism and a liberal economy, he observed. The lack of style that Zweig had already criticized was not the only thing, the essential point. The essential thing was that behind the speculative fever, behind the building speculation, there was no spirit of true welcome for the new immigrants—particularly those from Germany—who arrived in Palestine fleeing the Nazi terror and therefore needed to be taken care of and for their situation to be understood. Instead they found "a fire that they had produced themselves through their arrival: the fever of construction, a rise in land prices."[153] The new arrivals offered an opportunity to be repaid for the previous lean and bitter years. There was no desire to let them take part in building the houses and gardens that could also have been made less expensive with their help and cooperation. A spiritual involvement would also have been created that would have meant they did not feel like victims of the situation while also avoiding "the monstrous outrage of putting up thousands of homes for decades in Palestine with overhanging terraces, kitchens that were too small, no storage space and not enough large rooms."[154] Yet this disgrace took place, concluded the writer: "The living quarters of the new Jewish immigrants, their streets full of shops, testified to the spirit of a new era of the founders (*Gründerzeit*),"[155] which Zweig saw as unfortunately also portending the foundation of a State.

Zweig, however, also simultaneously emphasized that "what the Jews had been able to do in Palestine is invaluable."[156] They have given the Land electricity, roads, libraries containing a new Hebrew literature alongside world literature. This crisis-struck Land has been able to welcome the vilified Jews, deprived of their rights, robbed and persecuted, offering them a difficult but real existence. The writer disconsolately defined all this as "a pointless reality,"[157] because the guides, mainly Christian or Arab, who took tourists and visitors to desolate places, are deliberately made to ignore the

achievements of the Yishuv—who he believed had been able to overturn the anti-Jewish prejudice that the Jews were social parasites.[158]

These general processes of civilization also benefited the Arabs, observed the writer, who enjoyed progress that lasted "until the outbreak of the rioting, which is still putting a strain on the Land."[159] These tones are different from his criticisms reported above, with regard to the Jewish-Arab problem. In the letters, Zweig voiced his very personal opinions, his disappointments, but above all his discomfort. In this public communication, he voiced rather more universal, objective, less personal arguments. His judgment on the Jewish-Arab problem is, however, no less complex. Zweig compared the Jews who had arrived in the Country to the refurbishers of a run-down, empty and broken-down building that had been abandoned to the cockroaches, a building that they had now refurbished to make it inhabitable for all. There was now, however, a suspicion that they also considered themselves the rightful owners of the new refurbishment. Zweig saw this as the arena where the two large groups, the Arabs and the Jews, fought their battles.[160]

In a series of articles written for "Pariser Zeitung," Zweig did not shrink from addressing a thorny, very politically incorrect question, namely the fascination with which a part, although not the majority, of Jews in Palestine regarded Hitler. The writer described them as Hitlerjuden,[161] in an oxymoron that was only apparently paradoxical. Because the writer believed that the regard in which some Palestinian Jews held the Führer—excluding workers who recognized Hitler as a deadly foe—was essentially based on four very different reasons: the admiration of the *Ostjuden* for all that was German, the fact that Jewish nationalism had brought with it the habits of the country of origin, in this case Germany, whose German-national bourgeoisie were pro-Hitler,[162] the fact that part of the Zionist nationalists paradoxically saw Hitler as the person who had forced the Jews to emigrate to Palestine,[163] and last but not least a certain amount of creeping fascism in the mentality of a small but significant minority of Jewish nationalists in Palestine.[164] The writer addressed these perhaps unmentionable facts with the intelligence of someone who was not prepared to back down in the face of the obvious contradictions that dwelt within Palestinian society.

Another serious contradiction that Zweig pointed out was the trade agreement that the German Zionists entered into in August 1933 with the Nazi authorities, which was known as the Haavarah.[165] Under this agreement, Jews who decided to leave Germany for Palestine received the value of the property they owned in Germany in the form of German goods and products in their new country. This agreement was, however, criticized by the world Zionist organization, which could not overlook the aspect, however symbolic, of a partnership between Zionists and Nazis that trampled over matters of principle, and also objected to Haavarah breaking the economic boycott exer-

cised by Western democracies against Nazi Germany. The Haavarah could not fail to arouse the indignation of Zweig who believed that under no circumstances was it necessary to come to terms with the Nazis, not even if this gave rise to some financial advantage, which the writer judged in any case to be more supposed than real. After all, Zweig had been educated in Germany and taught that one should not make deals with the devil.[166]

"We will fight Hitler as if there were no White Paper[167] and we will fight the White Paper as though there were no Hitler,"[168] are the famous words uttered by Ben Gurion following the outbreak of World War II. One hundred and thirty-six thousand Palestinian Jews aged between 18 and 50 joined the British army as volunteers to address the first task: the war against Hitler.[169]

And Zweig? With the outbreak of war, the writer felt increasingly isolated, now cut off from contact with his friends and correspondents in Europe. Despite the indulgence toward Hitler displayed by the Soviet Union—whose regime Zweig had strongly criticized[170] at the time of the notorious trials and which was set on a course far from the non-Marxist socialism that the writer had once advocated—he was now becoming aligned with intellectuals such as Louis Fürnberg and Rudolf Hirsch. They were both faithful to Moscow and hostile to Zionism and had organized Communist clubs in Palestine where German was spoken. The question of language was, as we know, central to the writer's psychological balance as well as to his identity, and this would become increasingly true, as we shall shortly see. Before he actively joined these clubs—such as the famous V League, the Victory League, which organized fundraising for the Red Army with the aid of the writer—Zweig had already shown and proven strong sympathy for the "world's left." And Moscow was now the source of the regular fees that the writer received, guaranteeing him and his family financial survival while the situation of immigrant writers was becoming increasingly critical. It is true that he also had other sources of subsidy, such as the lectures and readings that Zweig held in German at clubs, bookshops, and private houses in Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem at events organised by members of the German-Jewish world who, like the writer, were not resigned to Hebrew and cultivated a cultural life in German parallel to the official cultural life of the Yishuv. From 1940, the Jewish Agency, together with the union of German immigrants, made financial subsidies available to the author and these increased as time went on. As mentioned previously, he also contributed to the "Palestine Post." Yet it was difficult to maintain a standard of living that had been similar to the one he had enjoyed in Berlin up to 1939. The author's expenses were quite high because they had to cover the secretaries to whom he dictated his work because his eyesight made it impossible for him to write, as well as family costs in addition to his psychoanalysis.[171] "I am like the prophet Elijah, because I live on Mount Carmel. Only he was fed by the crows and I am fed by the Russians," he confided to Ben Chorin:[172] this was certainly

Zweig's perception, fueled of course by ideology, of his financial survival in Palestine.

Reflecting on the writer's stay in Palestine during these final dramatic years means taking into account multiple, often interlinked factors: his Zionist disillusionment, his increasing linguistic and psychological isolation and his worsening financial situation—or this was his perception, despite everything—the ban that was also imposed with the aim of silencing the German language and the Yishuv's increasingly decisive condemnation of everything to do with Germany against the backdrop of world war. As a whole, these reasons encouraged his gradual alignment with the Soviet Union and the clubs supporting it in Eretz Yisrael, at which, among other things, the writer was held in high regard. These reasons also led him to close in on himself and his own problems, at the very time when the Yishuv was faced with one of the most dramatic times in its own history and the history of European Jews.

Thus, as the fate of the world hung in the balance, Zweig, together with Wolfgang Yourgrau, started a journal in German, the language of resistance,[173] entitled "Orient," inspired by the late great "Weltbühne," which was intended to address contemporary matters as well as literary and political issues. Information sheets in German were around at the time, in addition to the praiseworthy "Mitteilungsblatt" (mb), the mouthpiece of immigrants from Germany and Austria, but this was Zionist in orientation and politically moderate, though it gave expression to different voices. This venture by Zweig and Yourgrau aimed to find a large following among those German Jews who had long felt cut off from their German language and culture and it was specifically aimed at those who could not master Hebrew for the duration of the war and would probably leave Palestine once it was over. This is what happened in the case of Yourgrau, and also Zweig—as we shall see. "Orient" published articles by prestigious writers who were not necessarily hostile to Zionism, including Else Lasker-Schüler, Max Brod, Ludwig Strauß, to mention but a few, and also gave a voice to writers in exile, such as Hesse, Feuchtwanger, and Polgar. The journal came out weekly and regularly for almost a year, until a bomb put an end to it on 2 February 1943. "Orient" was very unpopular and even hated by Zionist extremists, who boycotted it from its launch in April 1942. Zweig, who regularly contributed one article a week, was not too displeased about the end of the journal, because he often disagreed with Yourgrau: "The bombs that put an end to 'Orient' came at the right time for my relationship with the journal," he confessed to his friend, the German scholar Walter Berendsohn in 1947.[174] His most significant contribution was a series of articles in seven issues, entitled *Antigermanismus*, in which the writer distinguished between the German people and the Nazi, or fascist, regime.

A heated debate nevertheless flared up on the pages of "Orient" following incidents that took place at the Esther Cinema on Piazza Dizengoff, in Tel Aviv. Here, on 30 May 1942, as part of a demonstration organized by the "V League," the writer was finishing a speech delivered in German, when young Zionist extremists burst into the room. They were members of Betar, the Zionist youth organization led by Jabotinsky and intent on vandalism, attacking those present, including Zweig, who lost his spectacles in the fray. They were removed by the police, but the event had to be halted. Zweig gave vent to his resentment in the pages of "Orient." He spoke and wrote in German, not because this was the language of Goethe or the language Hitler bawled in, but because "the older generation of the new immigrants wanted to be spoken to, inflamed and spurred to action in their mother tongue."[175] This did not mean being against Hebrew, or against the fact that young people expressed themselves in Hebrew. The struggle against the German language conducted by Hebrew zealots actually concealed something else, the writer believed, namely an old propensity to fascism and hatred for the Russian Revolution, because the 1917–1918 defeat still weighed on their souls.[176] Their hatred for the German language and contempt for the German Jews actually concealed a fear of their competition on a financial level and also stemmed from the fact that the latter promoted a policy of anti-fascism and support for the Soviet Union. "We anti-fascists in Germany have been defeated, but we are not beaten. We will return," concluded the writer: "We are already here."[177] Zweig took up the debate the following week in an article significantly entitled *Verwurzelung*, or rootedness. He now explained that he was often reproached by the Yishuv for living as an emigrant, not having taken root in the country and addressing German Jews in German. He had been precluded from the soil of Eretz Yisrael. And with the exception of the "Palestine Post," no one in the Land had been concerned with his own financial survival or that of his family, or his work. He argued that he found it very difficult for the outcome of this to be rootedness. Any spiritual rootedness, he concluded, also assumes a financial rootedness.[178]

These fiery words were destined to arouse a polemical reply in the columns of "Mitteilungsblatt" from Gustav Krojanker, a prominent German Zionist leader and intellectual in Palestine, significantly entitled *Sentiment und Ressentiment*. Krojanker harshly criticized the spirit of "Orient" and declared that he understood why non-Jewish Germans did not love the style and tone of the old "Weltbühne" published by Tucholsky and Ossietzky, which the review cited as its inspiration. The articles in "Orient" were mainly hostile, cold, and sterile, written by people who were not involved in the events of the Yishuv but remained outside, lived as emigrants, and soon, as quickly as possible, would leave without ever really being part of the Country.[179] "It is a journal for those with no ties, who have created an agenda out of this absence of ties."[180] According to Krojanker, Arnold Zweig did not

deny that he had no ties, except for that of resentment.[181] Zweig complained that none of his works, none of his plays had been taken into account, that no Jewish magazine had ever asked him to contribute an article. No one denied the difficulties of the situation but, Krojanker continued, we believed that Zweig came to Palestine because he already had ties with it. Actually we always thought that he came as a Zionist. No one—he commented—can make a living today by working as a writer, even those who are part of the new Hebrew literature. And he noted, bitterly, Zweig "came here not because he was attracted by the ancient homeland, but because he needed a new homeland, and any would do."[182] He concluded that Zweig had embarked on a path that they deeply regretted. Zweig's reply came in the columns of "Orient" on 11 September 1942. The thing that had the most negative impact on the writer was the intolerance that Krojanker displayed toward progressive Judaism, to Jews who had sided and were siding "with the left wing of humanity."[183] These were the Jews who had always been dear to Zweig, whom he had considered, for historical reasons, to be representative of Judaism, and that is the reason that he identified with them, going so far as to argue that socialism was a Jewish utopia and that socialism could be derived from the ethos of the prophets, as he wrote in 1920 in *Das Ostjüdische Antlitz*.[184]

"Only antifascist Jews," he now declared in the pages of "Orient," "are of interest to us."[185] And concluded polemically: "We have not come here to escape from one form of fascism and fall into another."[186] Once these words were uttered, the rift that separated Zweig from the stance taken by the Zionist leadership in Palestine could not have been deeper.

Despite everything, the years that the writer lived through before the end of the war were years of work: Zweig was involved in numerous projects and in 1942 he completed *Das Beil von Wandsbeck,* which was also translated into Hebrew in 1943. These were also years of growing loneliness and loss: his psychoanalyst and friend Max Eitingon died in 1943, followed by his friend Hermann Struck in 1944. As Germany's defeat became increasingly clear, he repeated his intention to leave Palestine and Zweig admitted to Feuchtwanger, in a letter written in English in March 1943, that neither of them should hesitate to play their part in the civilization to be reconstructed in the German language and within the province of their old Europe after a genuine German revolution and the genuine removal of Nazism.[187] Zweig was now living more and more in his own world. And just as in 1944 Churchill granted the Jews the honor of setting up an independent Jewish Brigade within the British Army for the first time in the history of the diaspora, Zweig, who would once have been proud of this, remained silent on the subject.

When the war was over in September 1945, he sent the following laconic yet dramatic words to his friend Feuchtwanger: "We are in an increasingly

empty space."[188] The situation of the Yishuv was becoming increasingly tense and dramatic: awareness of the true extent of the extermination of the Jews in Europe was exacerbated by difficulties in accommodating the survivors due to British intransigence over immigration. In an ironic twist of fate, just as the British were loosening their veto on Jewish immigration to Palestine, the attacks against the mandatory power were stepped up. Terrorism thus entered the life of the Yishuv, fueling tensions and dividing the Jewish community into two opposing fronts. While 1945 ended in a climate of uncertainty and tension,[189] on 22 June 1946, the notorious attack by the terrorist organisation Irgun Zewai Leumi on the King David Hotel, the British Headquarters, led to many casualties including Arabs, British, and Jews. Zweig, who had been working since 1946 on his new novel on Palestine, *Traum ist teuer*—a review and balanced consideration of Zionism that he did not complete until later and which did not come out until 1962 in Germany—condemned these actions, particularly when civilians were targeted. Shortly after his arrival in Prague in 1948, he stated in an interview with reference to the terrorism: "A very sad affair. Irgun has never given a good account of itself, a kind of Jewish Fascism . . . Maybe they even had good intentions, but they have always taken the wrong path in practice."[190] The Yishuv lived torn between hope and tensions, and for many the tensions were hardly bearable. Amongst them was also Zweig, who had remained in Haifa with his wife, while his son Michi was now in West Berlin as a U.S. Army soldier and his other son Adam was studying medicine in Zürich with the aim of exercising his profession later in Palestine, which was a fact that, as the writer admitted to Berendsohn, "permanently ties us to this beautiful and ill-treated country," and he concluded: "The thought of going away from here because here we could be taken over by events that would make it impossible to work in peace makes me feel tired."[191] Or, as he was prompted to say to Feuchtwanger, on 1 May 1948: "Uprooting a tree from its soil is nothing compared to snapping two branches.[192] from the tree that is Eretz Yisrael."[193] As things progressed toward the proclamation of the State of Israel, which took place on 15 May 1948 after the United Nations voted by a majority on 29 November 1947 to partition Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, and as the British withdrew their mandate and the Arabs and Jews took up arms against one another—Zweig reiterated his intentions to leave Palestine. He wanted to go back to Europe—he tried unsuccessfully to obtain a British visa—with a view to a quieter life and being able to devote himself fully to work and be appreciated. But all this also created in him a sense of fatigue and even uprooting, which seemed at odds with the writer's many claims to the contrary. The fact that the writer considered a solution that would allow him not to abandon Palestine entirely and yet at the same time return to the "wellspring of Europe"[194] seemed not merely to be a rhetorical exercise because in February 1948 he wrote to Berendsohn: "I will have to make my

headquarters in Europe, at least until winter and only at the end of November go back to Palestine, where we hope peace will have been restored. I am hoping that the Jewish state, if there will be one, will hold me in higher regard than it has done so far, but it remains to be seen whether this will happen."[195] A few months before leaving Palestine, he confided to Ludwig Marcuse that he wanted to alternate living in Haifa with living in Europe for six months a year.[196] He already seemed to have chosen his path, however: a month before leaving he admitted to Ruth Klinger, his faithful secretary who was now in Prague, that "you should never follow your ideals, for example, emigrating to Palestine if you are Zionist. Yet, one always follows one's heart."[197] This was a declaration of surrender, stronger than any accusation or violent dispute, tinged as it was with melancholy. Thus, when Buber sent Zweig a heartfelt letter to mark the writer's sixtieth birthday in November 1947, asking him anxiously if he could still think of him in some way as being close, "Certainly no longer on a journey," specified Buber, "there are no more journeys, but in a situation that I—*despite* everything—feel to be mine, imposed on and entrusted to me, are you there too? . . . Both of us together with our small people are taken to some place, not to follow a 'journey,' but only to make our way through the undergrowth, where things are certainly different from how we imagined them and yet this is still fulfillment,"[198] Zweig's laconic response would be that conscience was not determined by spirit but by the social being.[199] While for Buber, there were no more journeys but only getting along, Zweig had already marked out his path and it was one that would take him out of Eretz Yisrael to Communist Germany, where conscience was defined by the social being.

He wrote in a letter to Berendsohn from East Berlin on 13 November 1948 that "my decision to spend part of the year as if nothing has happened here came about very quickly,"[200] but, he added, he would be going back to Palestine in the spring to renew his passport. "I imagine," he continued, "that I will be on Mount Carmel again until January or February, if I am allowed to keep my apartment. In the meantime, we will have to see what remains of our old Palestine."[201] "I am sure you will understand why I do not give up my relationship with Palestine despite all my involvement in my sphere of literary action here," he wrote from Berlin to Berendsohn on 6 May 1949, "and they also understand that here."[202] "I will not abandon Berlin or Haifa as places to live and work,"[203] he assured Berendsohn from East Berlin on 26 July 1949. And so his significant to-ing and fro-ing continued, even though it was destined to remain on paper. Zweig seemed to be seeking a compromise between Berlin and Mount Carmel in Germany too, partly because his wife Beatrice was very depressed and found it disgusting to live among Germans: "The people have not changed,"[204] he wrote, and she would like to go back to Palestine: "I have to go to our people! Kol[205] Israel, *a* people."[206] But this plan was soon abandoned and the couple never went back to Palestine again.

Zweig opted for his dear old beloved German homeland, the only place where the writer could really feel at home.

During the final years he spent in Palestine, Zweig therefore continued to walk the path that Krojanker had criticized him for and he walked it right to the end, until his departure for Prague on 15 July 1948, two months after the State of Israel was proclaimed—leaving behind him a country at war. After that he moved to East Berlin and settled there permanently. In Germany, the 61-year-old writer was received with full honors, honors to which as we know he was perhaps too susceptible. His old homeland, now Communist, made him feel he was an author of international renown and the most representative and official author of the new regime.

It is difficult to say whether Zweig felt fully comfortable in this role. Of course his need for recognition and his love for the German world, culture, and language were satisfied after years of disillusionment and bitterness. But Zweig was a complex, intricate personality full of contradictions and this was perhaps his strength and not a weakness: "I burn for my contradictions,"[207] he admitted on this subject in 1967, a year before his death. While the Jewish question retreated into the background in the new East Germany, he never forgot Mount Carmel and the friends he had left behind and he did not forsake Israel, as it is true that he refused to sign an appeal condemning the State of Israel in 1967, during the Six Day War.[208] But by then that was another story.

NOTES

1. M. Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehten*, Vol. 1: 1897–1918, cit., pp. 321–322.
2. A. Zweig, *Aufzeichnungen über eine Familie Klopfer*, in Id., *Novellen*, Aufbau, Berlin 1961, p. 112.
3. A. Zweig, B. Zweig, and H. Weyl, *Komm her, wir lieben Dich. Briefe einer ungewöhnlichen Freundschaft zu dritt*, edited by I. Lang, Aufbau, Berlin 1996, p. 55.
4. A. Zweig, *Die Demokratie und die Seele des Judentums*, in *Vom Judentum*, Ein Sammelbuch, edited by the Bar Kochba Association of Jewish Students in Prague, Wolff, Leipzig 1913, p. 231.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
6. See on this subject my recent article: C. Sonino, *Rinascerai nella terra dei padri*, "Equilibri," issue 1, 2015, pp. 161–169.
7. A. Zweig, *Quartettsatz von Schönberg*, in Id., *Novellen*, cit. p. 339.
8. A. Zweig, B. Zweig, and H. Weyl, *Komm her, wir lieben Dich*, cit., p. 63.
9. A. Zweig, *Das ostjüdische Antlitz*, Fourier Verlag, Wiesbaden 1988, p. 156.
10. See A.T. Alt, *Zur Rezeption Martin Bubers durch Arnold Zweig*, in *Arnold Zweig. Berlin-Haifa-Berlin, Perspektiven des Gesamtwerks. Akten des III. Internationalen Arnold-Zweig-Symposiums.* Berlin 1993, edited by A.T. Alt, J. Bernhard, H.-H. Müller and D. Vietor-Engländer, Peter Lang Verlag, Bern-Berlin-Frankfurt am Main.-New York-Paris-Vienna 1995, p. 20.
11. Cit. in A.T. Alt, *Zur Rezeption Martin Bubers durch Arnold Zweig*, cit., p. 20.
12. *Ibidem*.
13. Arnold Zweig to Martin Buber, 23 April 1918, cit. in A.T. Alt, *Zur Rezeption Martin Bubers durch Arnold Zweig*, in *Arnold Zweig*, cit., p. 20.

14. A. Zweig, Review of *Jshkor*, in "Der Jude," Issue 5, 1918/1919, p. 244–246.
15. M. Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, Vol. I: 1897–1918, cit., p. 532 et seq.
16. See H. Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe. The Distinctive Path of German Zionism*, cit.
17. M. Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, Vol. II: 1918–1938, cit., pp. 34–35.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
20. *Golus*, or *Galut*, exile.
21. M. Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, Vol. I: 1897–1918, cit., p. 520.
22. A. Zweig, *Das neue Kanaan*, in Id., *Herkunft und Zukunft*, Phaidon Verlag, Vienna 1929, p. 165.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 188.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 190.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
34. *Ibidem*.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 217. In these characters in the text.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
39. M. Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten,* Vol. I: 1897–1918, cit., p. 428.
40. A. Zweig, B. Zweig, and H. Weyl, *Komm her, wir lieben Dich*, cit., p. 119.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 349.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 335.
43. A. Zweig, *Nachwort*, in Id., *Herkunft und Zukunft*, cit., p. 228.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 229.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
46. A. Zweig, Taschenkalender 1932, kept in the Arnold Zweig Archive, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, hereafter aza, 2620.
47. A. Zweig, Taschenkalender 1932, aza, 2620.
48. Arnold Zweig's *Palästina Eindrücke*, in "Jüdische Rundschau," issue 27, 5 April 1932, p. 130.
49. See A. Wolf, *Arnold Zweig und die hebräische Sprache. Ein wenig bekanntes Blatt aus der Lebensgeschichte des Dichters*, in *Arnold Zweig, Poetik, Judentum und Politik*, Akten des Internationalen Arnold Zweig-Symposiums aus Anlaß des 100. Geburtstages, Cambridge 1987, edited by D. Midgley, H.-H. Müller, and G. Davis, Peter Lang, Bern 1989, pp. 187–201.
50. Arnold Zweig's *Palästina Eindrücke*, in "Jüdische Rundschau," cit, p. 130.
51. *Ibidem,* emboldened in the original text.
52. *Ibidem*.
53. *Ibidem*.
54. *Ibidem,* emboldened in the text.
55. *Ibidem*.
56. S. Freud and A. Zweig, *Lettere sullo sfondo di una tragedia* (1927–1939), edited by D. Meghnagi, Marsilio, Venice 2000, p. 82. This translation will be used, with minor changes to adapt to the text.
57. On the subject of Zweig's novel, see the thorough discussion by L. Bosco, *Tra Babilonia e Gerusalemme*, cit., p. 162–182.
58. P. Theisohn, *Die Urbarkeit der Zeichen, Zionismus und Literatur eine andere Poetik der Moderne*, Metzler Verlag, Stuttgart-Weimar 2005, p. 41. On this subject, see also L. Bosco, *Tra Babilonia e Gerusalemme*, cit., p. 166.

59. A. Zweig, *Das neue Kanaan*, in Id., *Herkunft und Zukunft*, cit., p. 219.

60. On Agudat-Israel and the character of de Haan, see W. Laqueur, *Der Weg zum Staat Israel*, cit., p. 429–433. On the character of de Haan and Zweig's novel in general, see also the perceptive observations of L. Bosco, *Ipotesi di un omicidio: conflitti e disincanto ne* "*Il ritorno di de Vriendt*" *nella terra natia di Arnold Zweig*, in Id., *Tra Babilonia e Gerusalemme*, cit., p. 162–182.

61. See P. Theisohn, *Die Urbarkeit der Zeichen*, cit., p. 308.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 310.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 312.

64. Haganah (Defense), Jewish paramilitary self-defense league, created to defend the Jewish settlers against Arab attacks on the settlements, the first core of the Israeli army.

65. Light was not officially shed on the identity of the murderer until forty years later: de Haan had been killed by a Jew who was a recent immigrant, a member of the Haganah. Zweig was therefore right, but he had spoken at the wrong time. See on this topic M. Wiznitzer, *Arnold Zweig. Das Leben eines deutschjüdischen Schriftstellers*, Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, 1987, p. 47.

66. S. Freud and A. Zweig, *Lettere*, cit., p. 89.

67. Cit. in R. Wildangel, *Zweig und das deutsch-jüdische Milieu in Palästina (1933–1948)*, in *Deutscher, Jude, Europäer im 20. Jahrhundert: Arnold Zweig und das Judentum*, edited by J. Bernhard and J. Schlör, Lang, Bern-Berlin-Brussels-Frankfurt am Main-New York-Oxford-Vienna 2004, p. 183.

68. H.-H. Müller, *Arnold Zweig und der Zionismus*, in "Text+Kritik," issue 104, Munich 1989, p. 13.

69. See A. Zweig, *Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit, Ein Versuch*, Reclam, Leipzig 1991, pp. 249–251.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 251.

71. *Ibidem*.

72. See A. Zweig, *Arlosoroff-Gedenkwort*, in Id., *Jüdischer Ausdruckswille*, *Publizistik aus vier Jahrzehnten*, Aufbau Verlag, Berlin 1991, pp. 280–287.

73. Cit. in M. Wiznitzer, *Arnold Zweig*, cit., p. 51.

74. A. Gordon, *German Exiles in the* "*Orient*." *The German-language Weekly Orient (Haifa 1942–1943) between German Exiles and Zionist Aliya*, in *Placeless Topographies, Jewish Perspectives on the Literature of Exile*, edited by B. Greiner, Niemeyer, Tübingen 2003, p. 152.

75. S. Freud, A. Zweig, *Lettere,* cit., p. 85.

76. See E. Gottgetreu, *Arnold Zweigs Wanderung von Berlin nach Berlin*, in *"Emuna," Blätter für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit,* 4th vol., Issue 1, February 1969. The journalist Gottgetreu met Zweig in Jerusalem at the beginning of 1934.

77. See M. Wiznitzer, *Arnold Zweig*, cit, p. 64.

78. Cit. in *Arnold Zweig. Mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* represented by Jost Hermand, Rowohlt, Reinbeck 1990, p. 74.

79. S. Freud and A. Zweig, *Lettere*, cit., p. 97.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

81. *Ibid.*, pp. 99–100.

82. The ritual question or joke, partly serious and partly ironic, doing the rounds among the Yishuv and addressed to the Jews who left Germany for Palestine after 1933 was: "Are you here out of conviction or from Germany?." See on this subject M. Brenner, *Breve storia del sionismo*, cit., p. 120.

83. Letter to Frau Michaelis, I 1934, unpublished letter kept in the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Deutsches Exilarchiv 1933–1945—archival materials. Hereafter: dnb, dea.

84. A. Zweig, *Über Palästinas Zukunft*, "Pariser Tageblatt," 25 March 1934.

85. See A. Zweig, *Das ostjüdische Antlitz*, cit., pp. 82–83.

86. A. Zweig, *Improving Conditions. The Newcomers' Real Contribution*, in "Palestine Post," 6 December 1935, typewritten in German *Die Verbesserung der Bedingungen* (aza).

87. Nahum Goldmann (1894–1982), Zionist leader.

88. Letter to his brother Hans dated 23 December 1934, aza S63. Jakob Klatzkin (1884–1948), philosopher, writer, Zionist thinker.

89. S. Freud and A. Zweig, *Lettere*, cit., p. 97.
90. Beatrice, Zweig's wife.
91. S. Freud and A. Zweig, *Lettere*, cit., p. 107.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
96. See M. Wahrhaftig, *Haifa 1933–1948*, in *Deutscher, Jude und Europäer im 20. Jahrhundert: Arnold Zweig und das Judentum*, cit., particularly p. 211.
97. See M. Wiznizer, *Arnold Zweig und das* "*Land der Verheißung*"*—Heimat oder Exil?*, in *Arnold Zweig, Poetik, Judentum und Politik*, cit., p. 219, and D. Vietor-Engländer, *Arnold Zweigs Jahre in Palästina*, in *Arnold Zweig, Poetik, Judentum und Politik*, cit., p. 234.
98. Letter to Frau Michaelis, Haifa 1 December 1935, dnb, dea.
99. Letter to Rudolf Olden, Haifa 7 May 1935, dnb, dea.
100. Letter to Lily Offenstedt of 21 August 1940, aza.
101. See on this subject R. Wildangel, *Zweig und das deutsch-zionistische Milieu in Palästina 1933–1948*, in *Deutscher, Jude und Europäer im 20. Jahrhundert*, cit., and A. Gordon, *German Exiles in the* "*Orient*." *The German-language Weekly Orient (Haifa 1942–1943) between German Exiles and Zionist Aliya*, cit.
102. See also on this subject M. Wiznitzer, *Arnold Zweig*, cit., p. 61.
103. Cit. in M. Wiznitzer, *Arnold Zweig*, cit., p. 76.
104. Ivrit, Hebrew.
105. Poale Zion, Zionist and socialist workers' party.
106. S. Freud and A. Zweig, *Lettere*, cit., pp. 144–145.
107. *Ibid.*, pp. 148–149.
108. A. Zweig, B. Zweig, and H. Weyl, *Komm her, wir lieben Dich*, cit., p. 361.
109. S. Freud, A. Zweig, *Lettere*, cit., p. 145.
110. *Ibid.*, p. 139–140.
111. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
112. See L. Feuchtwanger and A. Zweig, *Briefwechsel*, Vol. 1 (1933–1948), edited by Hofe, Aufbau, Leipzig 1984, p. 277.
113. *Jüdische Rundschau*, the official mouthpiece of German Zionism, to which Zweig had contributed and helped to edit from 1924.
114. Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) and Max Nordau (1849–1923), founders of political Zionism, were both originally from Budapest.
115. Jakob Klatzkin, see note 88.
116. Kurt Blumenfeld (1884–1963), thinker and leader of the German Zionist movement, a native of East Prussia, Germany. Gustav Krojanker (1891–1945), Zionist intellectual and thinker, born in Berlin.
117. Letter to Gabriele Tergit, Haifa 27 June 1935. The letter is kept in the Deutsches Literatur-Archiv di Marbach, dla Marbach/A:Tergit 86.411/1.
118. See A. Wolf, *Größe und Tragik Arnold Zweigs. Ein jüdisches-deutsches Dichterschicksal in jüdischer Sicht*, The World of Books, London 1991, p. 259.
119. A. Zweig, *Das jüdische Palestina und der Orient*, in "Das Jüdische Echo," vol. 8, Issue 33, Munich 1921, now in Id., *Jüdischer Ausdruckswille, Publizistik aus vier Jahrzehnten*, Aufbau, Berlin 1991, p. 125.
120. *Ibidem*.
121. Cit. in L. Heid, "*Nein, liebe Ruth, Sie hören sich die Danksworte an, die ich Ihnen nicht ersparen kann*." *Der Briefwechsel Arnold Zweig und Beatrice Zweig/Ruth Klinger (1936–1962*), in Arnold Zweig/Beatrice Zweig and Ruth Klinger, "*Das nenne ich ein haltbares Bündnis!*," Briefwechsel (1936–1962), edited by L. Heid, Lang, Bern 2005, p. 36.
122. See on this subject R. Wildangel, *Zweig und das deutsch-zionistische Milieu in Palästina 1933–1948*, in *Deutscher, Jude und Europäer im 20. Jahrhundert. Arnold Zweig und das Judentum*, cit., particularly p. 184.
123. S. Freud and A. Zweig, *Lettere*, cit., p. 155.
124. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

125. Letter of 6 March 1936, aza.
126. S. H. Bergman, *Tagebücher und Briefe*, Vol. 1, 1901–1948, cit., p. 353.
127. L. Feuchtwanger and A. Zweig, *Briefwechsel*, Vol. 1 (1933–1948), cit., p. 38.
128. For a sociological approach to the problem of the immigration of German Jews to Palestine between 1933 and 1945, see E. Beling, *Die gesellschaftliche Eingliederung der deutschen Einwanderer nach Palästina. Eine soziologische Untersuchung der Einwanderung aus Deutschland zwischen 1933 und 1945*. Europäische Verlagsanstalt, Frankfurt am Main, 1967.
129. See on this subject the seminal work by S. E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers. The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness 1800–1923*, The University of Wisconsin Press, London 1982.
130. A. Zweig, *Disintegration. Balance Disturbed in Transplanting*, in "Palestine Post," 3 October 1935. Typewritten in German *Zerrüttungen*, aza.
131. A. Zweig, *Haifa's Jewish Crowds. A Picture of the Streets and People*, in "Palestine Post," 27 December 1935. Typewritten in German, xiv Massen, aza.
132. See D.D. Schiller, *Arnold Zweig und die Palestine Post in Jerusalem*, in *Exilforschung. Ein Internationales Jahrbuch*, Vol. 7, 1989, *Publizistik im Exil und andere Themen*, edited on behalf of the Society for Exile Studies by Th. Koebner, W. Köpke, C.-D. Krohn and S. Schneider in conjunction with L. Maas, Edition Text+Kritik, Munich 1989, pp. 184–201.
133. A. Zweig, *Das Notwendige und das Überflüssige am Leben*, 1939, typewritten, aza.
134. A. Zweig, *Das Museum in Tel Aviv*, 5 November 1935, typewritten, aza.
135. A. Zweig, *Haifa's Jewish Crowds. A Picture of the Streets and People*, in "Palestine Post," 27 December 1935. Typewritten in German, xiv Massen, aza.
136. S. Freud and A. Zweig, *Lettere*, cit., p. 149.
137. Prime Minister Chamberlain now imposed a new direction on British policy in Palestine: avoid violence and calm the attackers. The result was MacDonald's White Paper (1939), which in practice meant the end of the Balfour Declaration. On the 1939 White Paper, see W. Laqueur, *Der Weg zum Staat Israel*, cit., p. 279, and pp. 549–555, and M. Brenner, *Breve storia del sionismo*, cit., p. 125.
138. S. Freud and A. Zweig, *Lettere*, cit., p. 167.
139. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
140. L. Feuchtwanger and A. Zweig, *Briefwechsel*, Vol. 1: 1933–1948, p. 171.
141. S. Freud and A. Zweig, *Lettere*, cit., p. 171.
142. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
143. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
144. One of the most famous Sabbath songs.
145. S. Freud and A. Zweig, *Lettere*, cit., p. 197.
146. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
147. *Ibid.*, pp. 206–207.
148. Letter of 5 May 1939 from New York, aza S63.
149. In the text "Hebräern." Zweig distanced himself from the Jews of Palestine by describing them in this way.
150. Letter of 13 June 1939 from New York, aza S63.
151. S. Freud and A. Zweig, *Lettere*, cit., p. 207.
152. A. Zweig, *Der palestinenschische Knoten*, 1948, now in Id., *Jüdischer Ausdruckswille*, cit., p. 161.
153. A. Zweig, *Das Skelett der Palästina-Situation*, 1938, now in Id., *Jüdischer Ausdruckswille*, cit., p. 148.
154. *Ibid*., p. 149.
155. *Ibid*., p. 150.
156. *Ibid*., p. 152.
157. *Ibidem*.
158. *Ibid*., p. 152–153. See on this subject W. Kaiser, "*Vergebliche Wirklichkeit?*" *Das jüdische Palästina in der Wahrnehmung und literarischen Gestaltung von Resisenden*, in *Deutscher, Jude und Europäer im 20. Jahrhundert. Arnold Zweig und das Judentum*, cit., p. 194–195. On the "propagandist" efficacy of "Zionist" tourism in Palestine in the 1920s and

1930s, see the interesting contribution *Nationalized Tourism in Palestine*, in M. Berkowitz, *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project 1914–1833*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997, pp. 125–146.

159. A. Zweig, *Das Skelett der Palästina-Situation*, cit., p. 153.
160. *Ibid*., p. 157.
161. A. Zweig, *Hitler und Antihitler. Die Dialektik der nazionalsozialistischen Geschehens und seiner Ausstrahlung*, "Pariser Tageszeitung," 1938, now in Id., *Jüdischer Ausdruckswille*, cit., p. 235.
162. *Ibid*., p. 236.
163. *Ibid*., p. 245.
164. *Ibid*., p. 237.
165. On the Haavarah, see W. Laqueur, *Der Weg zum Staat Israel*, cit., p. 523, and L. Pinner, *Vermögenstrasfer nach Palästina 1933–1939*, in *In zwei Welten*, cit., p. 133–166. Pinner particularly emphasized the positive aspects of the agreement, which was able to rescue a certain number of German Jews and was aided by the contribution of members of the anti-Nazi movement in Germany. On the Haavarah, see also the more recent contribution by H. Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe*, cit., pp. 247–248.
166. See A. Zweig, *Hitler und Antihitler*, cit., p. 252.
167. See note 137.
168. Cit. in M. Wiznitzer, *Arnold Zweig*, cit., p. 103.
169. See also on this subject M. Wiznitzer, *Arnold Zweig*, cit., p. 103 et seq.
170. See on this topic his letter to Feuchtwanger of 7 February 1937 in L. Feuchtwanger and A. Zweig, *Briefwechsel*, Vol. 1: 1933–1948, cit., pp. 138–140.
171. See also on this subject M. Wiznitzer, *Arnold Zweig*, cit., p. 107–109.
172. Cit. in M. Wiznitzer, *Arnold Zweig*, cit., p. 111.
173. *Ibid*., p. 118.
174. Letter to Walther Berendsohn, Haifa 30 April 1947, dnb, dea.
175. A. Zweig, *Cinema Esther Pantomime,* "Orient," Unabhängige Wochenschrift, independent weekly. Zeitfragen/Kultur/Wirtschaft, 26 June 1942, issue 13, p. 2, facsimile copy of *Orient*, edited by W. Yourgrau and A. Zweig, with an introduction by H.-A. Walter, April 1942-August 1942 (Neudruck), Gerstenberg Verlag, Hildesheim 1982, p. 2.
176. *Ibid*., p. 3.
177. *Ibid*., p. 4.
178. A. Zweig, *Verwurzelung,* "Orient," Unabhängige Wochenschrift, independent weekly. Cit., 3 July 1942, issue 14, p. 5, now in *Orient*, cit., p. 5.
179. See G. Krojanker, *Sentiment und Ressentiment*, in "Mitteilungsblatt," Issue 33, 14 August 1942, p. 3.
180. *Ibidem*.
181. *Ibidem*.
182. *Ibid*., p. 4.
183. A. Zweig, *Der Pudels Kern*, "Orient," Unabhängige Wochenschrift, independent weekly. Cit., 11 November 1942, issue 23/24, p. 11, now in *Orient*, cit., p. 11.
184. See A. Zweig, *Das ostjüdische Antlitz*, cit., pp. 133–137.
185. A. Zweig, *Der Pudels Kern*, "Orient," cit., p. 12.
186. *Ibid*., p. 13. On the subject of this debate, see the article by W. Grab, *Arnold Zweig im Spannungsfeld zwischen zionistischer Ideologie und deutschsprachiger antifaschistischer Publizistik*, in *Arnold Zweig. Berlin-Haifa-Berlin*, cit., pp. 83–86.
187. See L. Feuchtwanger, A. Zweig, *Briefwechsel*, Vol. 1: 1933–1948, cit., p. 280.
188. *Ibid*., p. 347.
189. See also on these aspects M. Wiznitzer, *Arnold Zweig*, cit., pp. 147–153.
190. Cit. in M. Wiznitzer, *Arnold Zweig*, cit., p. 154.
191. Letter to Walther Berendsohn, 1 May 1947, dnb, dea.
192. This is a play on words: *Zweig* means "branch" in German.
193. L. Feuchtwanger, A. Zweig, *Briefwechsel*, Vol. 1: 1933–1948, cit., p. 504.
194. A. Zweig, *Aufzeichnungen über eine Familie Klopfer*, in Id., *Novellen*, cit., p. 112.
195. Letter to Walther Berendsohn, Haifa, 19 February 1948, dnb, dea.

196. See letter to Ludwig Marcuse of 21 January 1948 from Haifa, S43 aza.
197. A. Zweig, B. Zweig, and R. Klinger, "*Das nenne ich ein haltbares Bündnis!*," cit., p. 187.
198. M. Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, Vol. III. 1938–1965, Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg 1975, p. 150.
199. *Ibid*., p. 151.
200. Letter to Walther Berendsohn, Berlin 13 November 1948, p. 1, dnb, dea.
201. *Ibid*., p. 2.
202. Letter to Walther Berendsohn, Berlin 6 May 1949, p. 1, dnb, dea.
203. Letter to Walther Berendsohn, Berlin 26 July 1949, p. 1, dnb, dea.
204. Arnold Zweig, Beatrice Zweig, and Ruth Klinger, "*Das nenne ich ein haltbares Bündnis!*," cit., p. 236.
205. Kol Israel, Hebrew, "voice of Israel" but also "everything."
206. A. Zweig, B. Zweig, and R. Klinger, "*Das nenne ich ein haltbares Bündnis!*," cit, p. 229.
207. Cit. in M. Wiznitzer, *Arnold Zweig*, cit., p. 202.
208. See also on this subject M. Wiznitzer, *Arnold Zweig*, cit., p. 198.

Paul Mühsam

A German Jew Arrives in Palestine

When Paul Mühsam (Brandenburg, 1876 [date of birth]; Jerusalem, 1960 [date of death]) arrived in Palestine with his wife Irma—his daughters Else, Lotte, and Hilde would arrive later[1]—he was 57 years old but above all he had lived a life of achievement pursued with tenacity and effort, just as his surname suggests.[2] Nowadays his name means little or nothing to most people—though the memory of his cousin Erich Mühsam, an anarchist and socialist writer assassinated by the National Socialists, still lives on. Mühsam's day job was as a lawyer, but he lived for his writing. He may be considered a typical exponent of the German Jewish *Bildungsbürgertum* who reacted to the trials and tribulations of what was by no means an easy existence, packed with twists and turns, with great honesty and intellectual stature, leaving a record in his writings of his approach to the new realities of Palestine that was more individual than those considered so far. For the very reason that he did not choose Palestine out of Zionist ideals but rather because he was driven there by his need to escape from Nazi Germany, he came to the old new land without any particular ideals or ideological expectations, without an image of Judaism to verify or achieve—only a desire to save himself. This was not the least of the reasons that may have allowed him to come to grips with Palestine with honesty and openness, observing the light and shade in a way that was pragmatic and not preconceived or ideological. When Mühsam came face to face with the completely different reality of Palestine in the 1930s that was in many respects so foreign to his training and his life and experience in Germany, he was able, as we shall see, to display an unusual firmness of mind and independence of judgment alongside a truly rare willingness and ability to adapt. This attitude commands all the more

respect and admiration when we consider his lack of personal ostentation and the self-effacing approach he displayed in his writings and memoirs. These recount his human and intellectual adventure in his beloved Germany, which he was forced to flee in 1933, as well as in Palestine where he chose to stay after arriving as an exile, ultimately acknowledging it to be his true home.

Unlike the Mühsam family, which had distinguished itself by its social and economic success during the nineteenth century,[3] Paul had been forced to come to terms with financial difficulties and social frailty since his childhood. He was the only child of a Jewish family that, as he recounted in his memoirs and autobiography, wished neither to flaunt nor deny its Jewishness. While, to Paul's shame, Yiddish and Hebrew terms were still used when speaking at home, the family otherwise cultivated a certain freedom from religious practice in keeping with the times.[4] Once he arrived in Palestine, Mühsam admitted that he had not learned anything about Judaism at home.[5] Paul painstakingly and self-deludingly reconstructed the emancipation followed by assimilation that had not been desired by his parents and was alien to their lifestyle and, if he ever really achieved it, revoked it once and for all when he was overtaken by events.

Paul's childhood was a nomadic one, spent between Nordhausen, Breslavia, and Chemnitz—where he unostentatiously celebrated his bar mitzvah[6]—while his somewhat untalented father struggled to achieve social status and economic stability, repeatedly subject to the blows of commercial failure. From its very beginning, Paul Mühsam's life was spent "between," as Wolfram[7] astutely observed. His was a life spent not only between villages and towns, but between Judaism and assimilation, then later between homelands, countries, languages, and words. All in all, he had a difficult start. While his mother, Flora Wallach, smothered him with affection, his strict father did not even address him by name. His first break came when the family moved to Zittau, a Saxon city on the border with Bohemia, where Paul spent a relatively quiet childhood and attended the secondary school. Here he met Bernhard Jacubowski, with whom he entered into an intense and fraternal intellectual friendship that would last his whole life.

The young Paul was an avid reader and passionately discussed philosophical and religious matters with his friend while he rarely attended the Jewish prayer house because, he said, he was irritated by the hubbub that prevailed there and its members' lack of self-restraint.[8] After a short stay in Freiburg, Munich and Leipzig, in the winter of 1897 he arrived in the great metropolis of Berlin, where he fell in love with the theater while successfully pursuing his law studies. He began to publish poems and prose writings in a distinctive courtly style in literary magazines. In Berlin, he visited exhibitions and attended public readings as well as concerts and plays until he had built up his own personal and multi-faceted *Bildung*, fueled by a solid knowledge of the classics of German and non-German literature and philosophy that would

allow him to make his way in the world and stand up to the difficulties and trials of life. After obtaining his doctorate in 1905, he opened a solicitor's office in Görlitz and married Irma Kaufmann, with whom he spent the rest of his life. He very reluctantly took part in the World War and was soon assigned to office tasks at the Red Cross in Berlin. Here, far from his family in the big, bustling city, he was able to experience what was new in cultural life at first hand while leading a quiet life and devoting many evenings to his writing, which was no narcissistic statement in his case but a spiritual affirmation and liberation; a process of personal training and knowledge. After the war, he went back to Görlitz, where he was reunited with his family. As the legal profession became more a mere means of subsistence, writing allowed him to achieve a spiritual balance that would never leave him throughout his ups and downs. His spiritual life thus became the core of his existence and the time he devoted to reflection and concentration, reading, and writing, became his most precious time of day. He had long been absorbed with the idea of the positive religions being overtaken by a blend that would represent a kind of religion of pure humanity[9]—one of the leitmotifs of his whole existence[10]—which he also advocated in openly Lessingian tones in a play he wrote in 1923 entitled, *Der ewige Jude*, which was the most important literary work he published in Germany. In this work, Mühsam particularly addressed the theme of Jewish destiny, in some way presaging his future as a wanderer. His play also addressed Zionism, which he did not identify with but knew enough about to highlight its intrinsic aspects: "No longer in secret and no longer half-hearted / No, we are what we are to the full. / We are young Jews. . . . Come, brothers, let us go east. . . . The future is taking us to Zion."[11] With regard to the alternative between Zionism and assimilation, an alternative that he deemed misplaced, he instead opted for a third way that he believed could be a blend of both: to maintain the specificity of Jews within the State they belonged to.[12] His play highlights the danger of the growing anti-Semitism, while he hoped for the removal of the barriers in order that a misinterpreted *Christentum*—a fanatical form of Christianity, drained of its original lifeblood that no longer contained even an echo of the Sermon of the Mount—could become a *Christustum*,[13] as he defined it, that would lead to the full and peaceful integration of Jews in Germany. The late 1920s were a time of financial hardship for him, but he did not deviate from his lifestyle, continually caught between work and building up his own personal *Bildung*. Because of his great love for Germany and because of his attachment to the country together with its culture and language, he immediately grasped the dangers of National Socialism. He began to suffer reprisals and was ultimately arrested by the Nazis, dragged through the streets, and made an object of derision and ridicule in the place that he considered his own town, Görlitz. His lawyer's license was withdrawn, which meant that he could no longer work and live. He began to seriously consider the idea of emigrating, but

resisted. The Jewish cemetery of Zittau, containing the graves of his parents, was destroyed. His books were also burned. He would have preferred to stay in Europe, but he rejected the countries of emigration that he considered, Austria and Switzerland, for various reasons. The former because he feared future scenarios similar to those in Germany and the latter for financial reasons. Financial factors were the main reason he opted for Palestine. When he went there he was allowed to take with him the equivalent of 1000 Palestinian pounds, as required by Great Britain and as provided by the Haavarah, the agreement signed between Germany and the German Zionist authorities. This sum constituted a basis for starting a new life. In July 1933, he began to study modern Hebrew.[14] On 6 September 1933 he and Irma left Görlitz for Marseilles and, while aboard the ship sailing for Palestine, he saw the coast of Greece and Crete and understood that he shared the fate of the wandering Jew:

> And so I shake the dust from my feet
> and go, as I came, quite unknown.
> I salute you with a final wave
> My west, poor and lost.[15]

"And now we are on the way to a new homeland," is his diary entry for 16 September 1933.[16] "A new world is opening up. The east. I'm seeing everything as in a dream,"[17] he added upon his arrival in Haifa a few days later. His first stop was with his Landau cousins, who had emigrated a few months earlier to the city in the making, the city of the future.[18] And here he dwelt on the shortcomings of civilization that caught his eye in this building site of the city but he added that "you became so acclimatised to the atmosphere of this world in the making that within a few days you welcomed the noise and dust and thought only: thank God, it is being built. Almost overnight, every assimilationist became a Zionist—at least at first—and not merely out of need but out of conviction."[19] He immediately realized that the language issue was crucial: "You need to learn Hebrew as soon as possible, even if you can get by with German, because most people know Yiddish," he wrote in his diary.[20] He was struck by the fact that he was one of the few older immigrants: he looked around him and observed that there "are only young people. They sing and dance. Free men, upstanding."[21] In October he set out on a trip to get to know the country and referred to his journey as a "Tijul" that was undertaken by nearly all the new arrivals.[22] His view was clear-eyed, impartial, ready to embrace the positive aspects of his new life. In a letter written on 11 November 1933, two months after his arrival, he stated that Palestine was unlike any other land. "It is in the making. We need to recognise ourselves in it if we want to live there and acquire a second home of the soul. But when one arrives there, from the tragedy of Jewish fate, it can be a

blessing for future generations."[23] This observation came complete with a wish, namely that the Jewish people, driven by persecution, could regain the homeland they had lost 2000 years before, putting an end to their wandering. As we shall see, this thought was to become one of the central inspirations of the imaginative play that Mühsam would write in 1949, *Der Stern Davids*.

Although he appreciated his new situation, he could not ignore the fact that he could no longer live as before, but he did not complain. He had never complained and he would not begin now: "You have to reinvent yourself completely and repeat every day that freedom is the greatest asset of mankind."[24] Freedom compensated him for all his hardships, at least at the beginning of his emigration. As he observed in his memoirs, which were written later, beginning in 1935, "you could identify newcomers by their happy expressions because, despite their experiences and all the difficulties involved in adaptation and integration, everyone felt the freedom of word and deed that they had long been deprived of and considered it a priceless joy."[25]

Before we examine Mühsam's memories of the early period (which he did not document until later, from 1935, when he resumed his life and the memoirs that were ultimately published in Jerusalem in 1959, one year before his death) it is worth considering his initial "live" impressions dating back to the early months of his stay in the country.[26] These records were written in the wake of his new experience and Mühsam entered them in his diary. He also included them in a short text drawn up eight months after his arrival, and the searing and imaginative *Stimmumgsbilder*, that he was commissioned to write with a view to publication in America by his cousin Ernst Wallach, who commuted between Berlin and New York.

"We have been in Palestine for more than eight months and we have set up home. I have observed the country and tried to get to know the men. It is a marvellous land," he infused in the essay on his life in Palestine, "but the place where fate has brought us is also a strange land of contrasts."[27] He observed the way that old and new, east and west coexisted seamlessly with one another. In the street he met feral inhabitants and cultured Jewish intellectuals, while the desert-like lunar landscape suddenly gave way to sunlit orange groves.[28] Thus day suddenly became night and scorching heat gave way to cold. "This land of immediate contrasts is unique and completely different from other countries. It calls into question your whole person. It defies any comparison. You can only love it or reject it. In any case, you have to deal with it."[29] Dealing with it and experiencing it at first hand without any preconceived notions or prejudices was the path that Mühsam undertook on his arrival. He appreciated the building work that was going on in Palestine in both a material and a spiritual sense. He observed that building involved hard physical work and his thoughts turned to the fact that this would confound the prejudice about Jewish parasitism. He had not come from Europe because he was Zionist and to him this was the revelation of a

new world in which intellectuals became farmers and children became pioneers: "Everyone is united by great idealism."[30] He saw a dream coming true: being a united people and so creating a center, an anchor, a homeland for Jews from all over the world, freeing them from the curse of wandering. He understood with pain, not satisfaction, that his life in Germany was based on an illusion. It is not enough to take root in a land when the land is not prepared to accept this and your roots can be torn up: "Love, even in people's lives, unites only if it is repaid."[31] He hoped that nationalism was not the last word in the history of humanity. But it would take a long time for this to come about and Jews would have to go through the "construction of a state community."[32] He also realized that "Palestine does not only belong to the Jews."[33] The main reason it did not belong to the Jews was not world politics but because of the presence of the Arab population. Without driving out the Arabs but rather living in harmony with them, the Jewish people were entitled to return to Palestine due to their ancient presence in the land but also because they were able to enrich it culturally and financially. He reasoned that after centuries of neglect and plundering, the work put in by the young Jews would make the land flow with milk and honey again and this would also benefit the Arabs. He suggested that chauvinist forces were interested in sowing discord among the fellahs, the Arab peasants, and saw battles on the horizon, battles for existence but not wars. He nevertheless hoped that the confrontation would not take place on the basis of hate and deprivation of dignity but rather "mutual respect and recognition."[34] "For the first time, I see myself as the rightful citizen of a people with whom I feel united in a common destiny."[35] Writing in strictly idealist terms to the friends he had left in his past homeland, he explained that he had left Germany because the material basis of his existence had been taken away but above all because he could not bear the degradation and defamation. No one more than he loved and continued to love Germany, its landscape, and the German language, his own language. "But the Germany I love no longer exists."[36] Now he had to start a new life, even if there is a rift between the two lives, the first and the second: "Things no longer mean what they meant in a previous life."[37] Things stop at the surface and perhaps, he observed, this is a good thing, because if you went deep down you would risk collapse. The mind needs time to adjust, to withstand what has happened. He added that anyone who really wanted to know the country should visit the settlements "where the young Jews have got together and have created amazing things out of nothing, out of a stone desert . . . with great idealism, completing the construction of Palestine, ready for sacrifice and with moral purity."[38] Even though the kibbutzim were devoid of any Zionist angle, he was particularly keen on the idea and would often go back to reflecting and lavishing words of praise and admiration on them, as we shall see. His impressions, the *Stimmungsbilder*, intended for publication in the United States, differed from the previous

essay, even though they date from the same period, because they were not concerned with the subjective impact of Palestine on the writer. Mühsam instead set out to give an anthropological and cultural account that focused on the old and new problems that Palestine and the Yishuv now had to address. The writer therefore observed the problems that the wave of migrants fleeing Nazi Germany, not due to their beliefs or because of Zionism, had aroused in the Jewish population that had been living in the country for some time. He found that the old Zionists, who had made immense sacrifices to make Palestine a Jewish homeland, watched the new arrivals with ambivalence and the latter often complained of finding that Palestine fell short of perfection according to their European parameters. For the newcomers, Palestine was not a land of redemption but perhaps only a permitted land rather than a promised land in the wilderness of the world. While the craftsmen amongst the new immigrants found no difficulties and continued in their jobs, the graduates and intellectuals had to reinvent themselves and thus looked around to see what was still missing in the land, thus using up their time in drawing up new projects while their initial capital drained away. The Hebrew language, he noted, was essential for practical as well as idealistic purposes. Even those who knew religious Hebrew found themselves struggling with spoken Hebrew.[39] On the subject of new and old residents, Palestine was a great leveler, even those who had arrived only a few weeks previously already felt part of the Yishuv: "Thus each layer was deposited on the last."[40] The new arrivals no longer came from Russia, as before, but from Germany, and by necessity. "The emigrant firstly feels the sacrifices he must make, before experiencing the freedom he has achieved. Diseases await him . . . such as *charara* [a kind of skin rash] . . . , and then there are the sandflies . . . then there are flies, which are really annoying.[41] They are a scourge of the Land."[42] "When the new immigrant is accustomed to these scourges, he realises the freedom he has won: that of moving as an equal among equals."[43] While solidarity is not lacking, there is also red tape: "Even in the promised land, there are worries every day alongside the happiness."[44] While three languages were spoken in Palestine—English, Hebrew, and Arabic—as a lawyer he also observed that the laws were expressed in these three languages and there were different courts for each religion and faith community.[45]

In a subsequent passage, he dwelt on the problem of the language, Hebrew, a language that was extremely difficult to learn, particularly when you are no longer young, even though many courses had been arranged to teach the old new language.[46] He remembered how Elieser Ben Jehuda had introduced Hebrew as the language of conversation, prompting vehement clashes with the old inhabitants of the Yishuv, religious Jews who considered Hebrew to be a holy language.[47] "In private exchanges," he observed however, "Hebrew is not absolutely indispensable. A German might ask a question in

Hebrew but receive an answer in Yiddish, especially if he intends to buy something. It is part of customer service."[48]

In a later impression, he observed with regard to life on a kibbutz, that "proletarians become farmers who love their clod even more than farmers in the rest of the world, because it is built not only through their own efforts: they also won it through their own strength and tenacity for themselves and for their descendants."[49] In an additional report, describing life in a kibbutz on the slopes of Mount Carmel, he would say that "these men emanate happiness, they are happy to share with others."[50] On this kibbutz "there is a great number of graduates, doctors, lawyers and philologists. They all enjoy the happiness of a healthy life and freedom."[51] And he concluded: "we are leaving with the sensation that happy young people are growing up here and the message written on their bright faces that work is not a burden but a joy."[52]

On the subject of Haifa, the pearl of Palestine,[53] his city, he stated that "with the magical colour of the sun rising and setting, it can be compared to the finest images of cities in the world,"[54] and he went on to observe that the German Aliyah that originally mainly involved Tel Aviv and the Rehavia neighborhood in Jerusalem subsequently moved largely to Haifa, and Hadar, on Mount Carmel, to the extent that during the war the British soldiers humorously but also contemptuously referred to the latter as "*German towns*."[55] Lest we forget, Mühsam was not the only German Jew to choose to reside in Haifa. We know that Haifa was home to a large German settlement including Arnold Zweig, who, despite all his problems of identity, had chosen to put down his provisional, precarious roots there.

While his impressions recorded "live" and, as we know, mainly intended for publication, were very positive, when the fatal year of 1933 was drawing to a close, the darker side of his life as an immigrant began to emerge in a confession destined to remain private:

> I am still experiencing everything as if in a dream, I am not yet myself again. The upheaval took precedence. Despite everything I was working on—English, Hebrew, the accounts of the boarding house—[he had opened a boarding house with his wife Irma [56] in Beth Galim, in the western part of Haifa]—and the negotiation of mortgages [another trade he had dreamed up in order to earn a living, *author's note.*] life is dragging on in a non-spiritual, vegetative way . . . everything is foreign to me, even the sea and Mount Carmel. Only the view of the starry sky and its eternal laws gives me consolation, strength and confidence. Everywhere I am guarded and sheltered in God.[57]

His enthusiasm and honeymoon with Palestine was partly scaled down and seemed to give way to a depression, partly due to the diseases and high fevers caused by the sandflies, from which no newcomer could escape. He began to make comparisons and remembered the past.[58]

> For a long time, [he confessed,] I felt attracted by everything that was German as if it was something native. . . . during the first year, I often passed through the German settlement because the image of the street, the buildings, the little houses with verses from the Bible, the way the gardens were kept with their green-painted fences, with the palm set back from the trees that spread shade, and much more, gave me the illusion of being in a German village and I could only respond in one way: by throwing myself on the ground and sobbing.[59]

He could not hide from himself the loss and the difficulties, spiritual and material, of his new existence. Due to his very limited knowledge of Hebrew, he was unable to work as a lawyer—but this did not worry him too much—and thus he reinvented himself, like most of the graduates who arrived in Palestine, as an accountant in his boarding house, as a mortgage and land agent, as an advertiser, and as a stamp dealer—all trades that barely earned him and his wife Irma a living. Above all, he was worried about the spiritual difficulties of his new existence in Palestine:

> The time for easy creation in quiet woodland glades was over . . . brought up as a European and imbued with a pre-war German cultural heritage, inextricably linked to the motherland, to the German forest and the German village and above all to the German language, the foreign language has got the better of my beloved instrument, the only one that this poor musician can play, I felt my separation from the world that was so dear to me like an irreparable break in my lifeline, being thrown into a completely foreign and different environment like an exile.[60]

And thus he identified with the famous lines by Heine: "I once had a beautiful fatherland. It was a dream."[61] This bitter confession came much later, however, than the events recounted here because it was part of the manuscript published in Jerusalem in 1959. Even in the memoirs that, as we said, he wrote from 1935, he confessed: "Something has broken in my soul. It is a characteristic spiritual trait of the emigrant to suffer a break in his lifeline. The second life, which must begin, cannot completely take over the first. The link is broken. . . . No one knows better that there is a fatherland than the emigrant."[62]

"Unfortunately, the vegetative well-being was not matched by spiritual development,"[63] he insisted. This fate, as we know, was shared by many German Jews in Palestine. The thing that he struggled to resume was his spiritual life, linked as it was to the German-speaking world, the familiar family world of childhood, youth, and maturity, the world of *Bildung*. Cultural life, he observed peremptorily, is denied to German Jews.[64] This exclusion from cultural life was all the more painful for those, like him, who had found their strength and balance in reading and writing and, more generally, had staked everything on a spiritual life. As far as his literary life was concerned, despite the presence of writers with the stature of Bialik or Agnon, he

admitted that he continued to feel connected to the non-Jewish literary heritage.[65] On this subject, he described going to the Habimah theater—he who had always loved the theatre—but not understanding anything of the play in Hebrew,[66] and how he was nevertheless able to follow the concerts by Huberman—a character we are already familiar with from Tergit's account—in the recently established Philharmonic:[67] music was the only thing that counted. "No language in the world can really replace your mother tongue. The fluid that emanates from it penetrates the depths of your soul."[68] The word *sea*, he would say, and the word *mountain* no longer have the same meaning as before. They no longer correspond to the original impressions associated with these words.[69] He admitted that his was the "tragedy of all those who are devoted to the word and who have lost something irreplaceable that meant all the world to them. We poor musicians have only one instrument that we can play: the German language!"[70] Spiritual isolation, due primarily to his language problem, was therefore the most painful and tangible sign of the breaking, ripping, and tearing between his old life and his later life as an emigrant in Palestine. It is therefore no coincidence that his spiritual life began to recover only after 1935, when he took the difficult decision to set aside Hebrew—a language that was too different from the familiar Indo-Germanic languages and that, he would say, can no longer be learned once one is getting on in years[71]—and he carried on living, thinking, and writing in German in an attempt to pick up the threads of his interrupted life.[72] He nevertheless looked with admiration on the construction of the new language, which he considered necessary for building the country, emphasizing that everything would work out when the children went to school and learned it naturally and effortlessly.[73] About two years after arriving in the country, Mühsam managed to heal his spiritual break and significantly succeeded in resuming his interrupted reading of the correspondence between Goethe and Schiller[74] while at the same time writing his memoirs.

We should not forget that Mühsam was a German Jew and remained as such in Palestine, even though we could inaccurately define him as a Yekke, which is the contemptuous and humorous name that the eastern Jews gave to the German Jews who would not or could not adapt to the new Land. Despite some difficulties, Mühsam nevertheless did manage to adapt, as we know, and fitted in much better than some Zionists who nurtured great dreams and hopes and above all found an inevitable gap between their own personal ideas of Zionism and the reality once they had arrived in Palestine. Mühsam did not have any great expectations and the thing that he felt he had achieved in Palestine was the ability to be a free man who could walk tall and live his life. In Palestine he discovered that he could be a Jew without being oppressed, mocked, or cast out for this reason. He therefore discovered a freedom that was not merely freedom from something, that is, oppression, but above all freedom for something, the freedom to be himself. This may have

been what he was expecting although, in his case, none of this was connected with a plan for cultural or national renaissance, a new idea of society or a dream of a new man, a new Jew. Only once he had arrived in Palestine did he take note of the radical transformation that had taken place within him, within his Jewish being. "I came to the realisation that the obligation that had always been imposed on me unconsciously in public, dictated by the latent feeling of being considered different, had ceased to influence my behaviour in Palestine,"[75] he would observe in his memoirs. "The lack of a formal element, which was the dominant sign in the relationships of most people, was clearly an outcome of the liberated life in Palestine. Palestine makes men essential."[76] This essentiality was unknown in his previous life where appearance came before substance, where people behaved in a manner designed to avoid prejudice and the important thing was not to seem Jewish, in other words to appear different from what you really were. The thing he was discovering in Palestine was the freedom to be a Jew, a Jew without problems of identity. Another aspect of the freedom offered by the country lay in the fact that everyone was starting from scratch for better or for worse, and had wiped the slate clean.[77] Above all, he saw the positive side of this, such as not being judged based on your past and according to external, foreign yardsticks.[78] As he would say, here we are equal among equals, we are at home.[79] Later, however, when faced with the over-familiarity that comes from dropping one's guard, not having to prove or hide anything, he also saw the risk of dropping all formalities or even of being downright rude.[80] He certainly observed this rudeness among Arabs but also—and this had the greatest negative impact on him—among the eastern Jews who had arrived in the land some time previously from Romania, Poland, and Galicia and toward whom he felt ambivalently, feeling himself as substantially different and in a certain sense superior as a German Jew.

The feelings of ambivalence between *Ostjuden* and German Jews in Palestine, made up of a mixture of mistrust and awe, were mutual. As we already said in previous chapters, the rules that had applied at one time had been overturned. While in Germany between the end of the nineteenth century and the early 1920s, the *Ostjuden* who arrived en masse in Vienna or Berlin in search of a better life were treated by the German Jews as undesirable guests at best or even with outright hostility or contempt, now in Palestine the German Jews were the newcomers. They were the ones, as we know, who were looked down upon by the *Ostjuden*, who often saw the German Jews as unwary prey who could potentially be exploited for financial gain,[81] because they were inexpert and uninformed about the Land, particularly when they were newly arrived. This attitude, which showed little solidarity, was also due to the fact that the *Ostjuden* despised the German Jews not merely because they lived in Palestine as exiles from their beloved Germany due to their unwillingness or inability to adapt, but also because they had

believed in emancipation, they had allowed themselves to be seduced and then hounded out of Germany—which now represented a danger for all Jews—and they had abandoned tradition, leading an assimilated life. And just as at one time the German Jews had reproached eastern Jews arriving in the west for stirring up anti-Semitism, now the *Ostjuden* blamed the emigration of numerous German Jews from Germany for the worsening of Arab hostility and the resulting riots, which regularly shook the Land.[82]

With regard to the relationships of conflict between the *Ostjuden* and the German Jews in Palestine, Mühsam reported a popular joke, a *Witz*, which was doing the rounds in the Land at that time. It was said that Berlin Jews complained about the presence of so many *Ostjuden* in the Land and for this reason they had gathered together in Tel Aviv to publish a journal with the telling title "*In der Fremde*" ("Abroad").[83] We also know that in the eyes of German Jews, not only Mühsam, the eastern Jews were believed to be directly responsible for banning German in public life and imposing Hebrew.[84] As we know, for Mühsam too, this ban meant exclusion from the cultural life of the country.

What was Mühsam's opinion of the eastern Jews? Complex, it could be said. From his arrival in Haifa, the city that would become his own and that, as we know, enchanted him due to its beauty, he immediately noted that the Jewish part:

> Had practically nothing that a person accustomed to European civilisation needed. . . . The shops resembled those of an eastern Jewish town. And in fact the owners were almost exclusively Jewish immigrants from Poland, Galicia and Romania. The service was sloppy and inattentive, the tone was overfamiliar, the goods were not at all appetising, the equipment was dirty and the store was messy.[85]

"But this also changed in a few years. . . . The immigrants from Germany brought other attributes of European civilisation in addition to cleanliness and discipline. The image of the city changed radically, little by little":[86] those who arrive in Haifa today, he added, are unaware of the change because they see only what it has become. As in the rest of the country, the work of modernization and civilizing was due to a large extent to the German Jews. Their influence was particularly felt in the areas of trade and transport. They changed the composition of the cooperatives: in the transport cooperatives, for example, dilapidated cars and buses were replaced with clean and modern vehicles, proper stops were established and order and discipline was imposed when the vehicles dropped off and picked up passengers.[87] With regard to concerts, too, the German Jews brought about a radical change: whereas previously the audience came and went at will, talked among themselves, smoked, and ate, a miracle took place when Toscanini conducted the orchestra of Palestine a few years later. Everything was as impeccable as it

was in Europe, all the artists were perfectly trained, displaying the touches of their German teachers. Exemplary discipline and absolute calm reigned, the men were in tuxedos and the women were elegantly dressed. You could almost imagine that you were in Berlin, Paris, London, or New York. It was almost as if Herzl's Utopia had come to be, as he imagined it in his utopian novel, *Old New Land*. The audience that was present, recounted Mühsam, was mainly made up of German Jews, but also included the most well-to-do part of the Yishuv, who had quickly been drawn in by the taste of the German Jewish immigrants, who raised the bar in all sectors of Palestinian culture and civilization.[88] He said that when he arrived as an emigrant in 1933, the milieu was very different from the one in his country of origin and he had had to adapt quickly to the new situation: "He adapted,"[89] as the eastern Jews said, and was satisfied that he had got a little closer to them, even if only slightly. "Their [the eastern Jews', *author's note*] relationship with them [German Jews, *author's note*] was truly unique. On the one hand, they looked down on them with the pride of residents who were suspicious of each newcomer. . . . This was partly because they judge them not to be real Jews, they did not go to the "Schul" and they did not wear a kaftan and ringlets but a jacket. This was why they were called Yekkes. The *Ostjuden*, for their part, definitely had a point. They were the ones who were preserving tradition, while the *Westjude* yearned to transcend the boundaries of religion and state in the name of universal bourgeoisie whose time on earth had not yet arrived. The *Ostjuden* were also the ones who had done what was essential for the desired Eretz Yisrael, which had run the risk of being forgotten due to the western spirit. Yet on the other hand they also admired . . . the new arrivals for the qualities that they themselves lacked, for the ability they had shown in quickly rising to a dominant position, for the conscientiousness they had introduced as the norm in business instead of careless bad habits and for the success that spurred the eastern Jews to imitate those from the west."[90] The relationship between *Ostjuden* and *Westjuden* was therefore complex, full of light and shade, old and new resentments, old and new admiration. As may be guessed, Mühsam praised the adaptability of German Jews, their resourcefulness, the fact that they did not lose heart, their ability to civilize, and their *Bildung*. He also added, "the spiritual behaviour of German Jews is all the more praiseworthy because they lived the illusion of an apparent safe haven and had never dreamed of emigrating, unlike the Eastern European Jews who had never felt safe and were always prepared to leave."[91] The thing that really characterized the writer's relationship with the *Ostjuden* was not fanaticism but balance and moderation: "When faced with such a heterogeneous mass," he warned, "you have to be careful not to generalise."[92]

"One of the disappointments we experienced was the relationship of tension between the Arabs and Jews, which we had not imagined could be so

intense,"[93] he wrote in his memoirs published in 1959. This retrospective consideration was also filtered by the many events following his arrival that changed the history of Palestine, the relationship between Arabs and Jews, and ultimately gave birth to the State of Israel in 1948. What was Mühsam's attitude to the problem of coexistence between Arabs and Jews, a problem that, we know, had been central not only to those who identified with German Zionism and, more closely, with spiritual Zionism, namely Scholem, Bergmann, Arnold Zweig, but also to the sensibilities of Else Lasker-Schüler and to a certain extent Tergit? "Despite the tensions, Arabs and Jews used to live together in peace, at least outwardly,"[94] observed Mühsam in his memoirs, recalling his arrival in Palestine. "If the Jews lived with the Arabs in a relationship of tension and the latter considered them intrusive enemies, they nevertheless faced one another as two legitimate parties and the struggle that took place between them allowed them the possibility of freely defending themselves, without defamation."[95] Upon the onset of the riots in Jaffa, in October 1933, where he was present, the Arabs demonstrated violently and showed hostility toward the Jewish emigrants from Germany, he more clearly realized the political situation in which he found himself and recognized the looming danger due to the hostility of the Arab people "about which the Zionists remained tactically silent in order not to curb immigration."[96] Until then, he admitted, he had no idea how hostile the Arabs were to the Balfour Declaration and the ideals underpinning Zionism to the point that, although he privately entertained good relations with individual Jews, he vowed he wanted to fight Zionism until his last drop of blood. Faced with this state of affairs, Mühsam began to look to the future with pessimism,[97] and regretted not choosing Italy, the Ligurian coastline, as a destination for his exile.[98] During the uprising of 1933, he noted that the Jews behaved passively, with the exception of the revisionists, who made the headlines for the wrong reasons. It was difficult for those, like him, who had not grown up in the Zionist movement, to find their way among the many large and small groups.[99] These riots, that were destined to repeat themselves with growing violence in later years, had not yet left their mark on economic life, he noted. The Arabs were present everywhere, sometimes alone, sometimes together with the Jews, involved in building and roadworks, drainage work, and rubbish collection:

> In my early years, relations between the Jewish settlements and the Arab villages were often friendly. . . . We courteously greeted one another in the other's language. . . . During the years of unrest, partly because of the terror and hatred whipped up against the Jews, those relationships increasingly disappeared until in the end two hostile worlds faced one another, each aware only of the other's facade.[100]

In 1930s Palestine, Mühsam thus documented the affirmation and clash of the two forms of nationalism and the construction of two new meta-identities, Zionist and Palestinian Arab, by their respective ruling élites who were working to quell the desire to live together, which was growing from the bottom up, as the historian Ilan Pappe observed.[101]

> Fanaticism grew from both sides, including on the economic front [observed Mühsam]. The Arabs no longer went into shops run by Jews and the Jews preferred to pay higher wages and prices rather than buy from and hire Arabs. This was also due to the growing unemployment among Jews. . . . The newcomers were sometimes more fanatical than the residents: the latter still hired Arabs to work in their orange groves, out of habit or to save, which meant more than solidarity.[102]

Mühsam suspected that the Arab revolt was encouraged by the Nazis, who wished to destroy the Jews wherever they were:

> The long Arab revolt broke out in 1936. . . . After the revolt of 1933 and then again in 1936, it was said that the Germans had supplied the Arabs with weapons. . . . The uprising broke out because the Arabs were told that the Jews wanted to drive them out of their lands. . . . The extent of the immigration played into the hands of those who put about those slogans.[103]

These words of Mühsam dramatically outlined what would become an ongoing conflict.

The Arab extremist side was responsible for acts of terrorism condemned by the whole civilized world, apart from Germany.[104] Terrorism achieved its goals, causing insecurity in public life and threatening trade and the economy. "Immigration slowed down. . . . The solution was 'Palestine for the Arabs.'"[105] The Jews were granted rights as a minority, immigration was blocked, the sale of land to Jews was prohibited. He reported that the 1939 White Paper[106] disappointed everyone: the Jews because they saw it essentially as a retraction of the Balfour Declaration and the Arabs because they had not been granted everything they wanted.[107] Yet beyond Mühsam's personal reconstruction of the facts, which did not set out to be an in-depth and considered historical analysis, it is interesting to try and see what he saw as the basis of the right of the children of Israel to return to the land, in his opinion as a lawyer as well as a man of culture. "I am very far from believing that the Jews had another right to possession outside the Balfour Declaration."[108] And he continued:

> There is no moral right and there is no right of precedence over the rights of the living, especially when, as in the case of the Arabs who defeated the Byzantines, they had ruled for 1300 years. Although it is true to say that the Mandate recognised and emphasised Palestine's "historical connection" with

> the Jewish people who were solely responsible for Palestine's fame and universal importance.[109]

To this point, he seemed to be speaking as a lawyer who cared about establishing the origin of the law, who was entitled to the Land and why. "But," he added—and now we start to see the poet, the writer, his inspiration and his desperation—"there is a higher law than the law being changed. . . . A people can derive their rights from the stars if they have had the misfortune to be robbed of the land that God gave to everyone."[110] He went on to specify that while the Arabs had huge areas available to them, the Jews did not have a homeland, were persecuted, and without the use of violence they could only rely on a solemn responsibility undertaken by a "dominant and acknowledged power."[111] Mühsam's opinion seems to agree with the line of thought prevailing in the Yishuv. As time went on, for example in 1944, Mühsam also saw attacks instigated by the Jewish side—attacks approved by a small Jewish minority—and he adopted an attitude of strong condemnation. This was not merely because "the Jews think they can act like the Arabs, but they do not realise that they are not a power while the Arabs are," but also because he saw terrorism as the result of the Jewish nationalism that he condemned because Palestine was not only the land of the Jews. He went on to say that the acts of terror were "due to the fact that young people in Palestine have been wrongly taught that Palestine is the land of the Jews. The resulting idea of nationalism, which has nothing to do with reality, is the source of all evil—as it is everywhere."[112] On 3 March 1939, not without some trepidation, he ceased to be a German citizen, became naturalized, and swore his allegiance and obedience to the government of Palestine. Before taking this step, which was full of symbolic significance because he was and continued to feel a German Jew, Mühsam's memoirs reveal that he and his wife first tried to emigrate to America, but this did not prove possible.[113] Although this attempt was admittedly dictated by the extreme insecurity and precariousness of the situation in Palestine and the Arab hostility,[114] it makes us think about the extent to which he prioritized his ties with the Western world, with America—which was of course a new world but still with more indisputable ties to the old continent of Europe than could be found in Palestine. The fact that those roots were so difficult to dig up says a lot about the identity of our writer, who adapted to his new situation but was and remained a European, an old humanist, and a German Jew.

We cannot conclude this short discussion without another look at Mühsam's enthusiasm for the new kibbutz movement and will then end this chapter by looking at his imaginative play *Der Stern Davids* (1949), written following the proclamation of the State of Israel, a kind of appendage to *Der ewige Jude* (1923), which summarizes and to a certain extent stands as a parable of the writer's life between Germany and Palestine. We will not

proceed any further than this, namely to 1960,[115] the year of his death, because our cut-off point is 1948.

We know that Mühsam was captivated by the many different types of settlement, and he dwelt at length on many different occasions on the nature and prerogatives of this situation. The thing that struck the writer was his finding that "everyone here enjoys the happiness of a healthy life and freedom."[116] He made this observation on visiting a kibbutz composed mainly of Russians, Romanians, and Poles who had been joined by a good number of German graduates. Everyone was clearly happy, even though the latter were engaged in manual labor. He added that "the rapid growth of the cities of Haifa and Tel Aviv is not the essential thing when it comes to the work of building Palestine. The foundation of Jewish life," he observed, "is the settlement, the *Siedlung*."[117] The writer reviewed the different forms of settlement: the *Moshava*, the least characteristic, was "a purely individualistic form of settlement,"[118] whereas the *Moshav* "is built on a collective basis. Small farmers join forces without abandoning their capitalist way of life."[119] The *Kvutzot*, he continued, "represents a closer relationship, because it is not merely an economic community but a living community."[120] Since there is no private property here, everything ends up in a common fund to meet the needs of the whole community, an apartment, healthcare, clothing, instruction, children's education, care for the elderly, leisure, culture, the *Kvutzot* supports everything for all its members. The writer clarified that despite the form of this community, "grey egalitarianism is not the order of the day. On the contrary, great importance is attached to the satisfaction of individual needs and all such desires are respected as far as possible."[121] The concept of equality does not mean rejecting the diversity of human needs but rather everyone's equal right to personal fulfillment and respect.[122]

The kibbutz, which represents the beating heart of Palestine, is a kind of development of the *Kvutzot*, the difference being that the members, the "comrades" are more numerous.[123] He described the various types of *kibbutzim*: one affiliated to the Second International, a *kibbutz* positioned between the Second and the Third International, which only took people from the Bundist movement, and the Mizrahi *kibbutzim* which were politically socialist and religiously orthodox. The attention he paid to this multi-faceted movement revealed its impact on him, how much he cared about it and the importance he attached to it. "This variety of community groups," he stated, "show us how Jewish youth are searching for new ways to achieve their ideals and at the same time the extent to which these movements are in a continuous flux."[124] And he emphasized: "All the comrades seem happy. . . . Their road ends with the building of Eretz Yisrael," and he concluded: "During the riots, the *kvuzot* and *kibbutzim* isolated on their own land were very vulnerable and at the mercy of Arab attacks and it was a good thing that they had weapons after the events of 1929. A large number of *halutzim*, and

young girls too lay down their lives for the Zionist ideal by taking up arms."[125]

Mühsam was struck by the fact that in this multi-faceted *Siedlungen* settlement movement[126]—which he believed to be the true heart of Palestine—the men and women pursued an ideal of work that was not about constriction but joy. Given his experience, Mühsam was highly sensitive to this aspect and attached a very high moral and liberatory value to it. He perhaps discerned in it a true alternative to the diasporic existence. Here the new Jewish youth was building the new reality of Eretz Yisrael with enthusiasm and generosity upon a basis fueled by ideals and a pioneering vision of life.

"We lived in happy contemplation, until the arrival of World War II."[127] Mühsam did not set out to write a history of World War II even though it involved him closely and also had dramatic repercussions for Palestine under the British mandate. He noted in this regard: "We lived through times of fear, especially when the Germans marched to Africa and were about to pass through Egypt and enter Palestine, where the Arabs would have had no problems with the proposition of killing the Jews."[128] In 1947, he welcomed the UN's decision to partition Palestine, which he defined "an event of historic impact. A Jewish State again for the first time since biblical times,"[129] and he embarked on writing his fifth book of memoirs, which he hoped would be his last.[130] In this he reflected on the effects that historical events had had on his life. He followed events, not without some apprehension for the future and hoped that his children and grandchildren would be spared from further war. In 1946, his wife Irma died. She had been his life companion and her death was a very painful wrench that he would never recover from.[131] It prompted him, in 1949, to write an imaginative play, *Der Stern Davids*,[132] in sixteen acts, conceived as a kind of apotheosis of Irma[133] and also as a final statement on his own life.

The action took place partly in heaven and partly on earth, in Germany and Palestine, between 1914 and 1948, the year in which the State of Israel was proclaimed. This imaginative play constantly suggests a book that was much loved and continually re-read by the writer, together with Irma: Goethe's *Faust*. It is perhaps no coincidence that both Schüler, in *IchundIch*, and Mühsam chose to write plays to address the German Jewish situation and were also paying tribute to the great Goethe and his creation Faust, taking it beyond the borders of Germany to the new old land. The action opens in heaven, where Stella, a heavenly creature who is none other than Irma, falls in love with David, alias Paul Mühsam. Stella states a need for Jews to leave the sufferings of the diaspora behind them and go back to their new homeland: "The Jewish State," she proclaims, "must be reborn."[134] Her proposition moves heaven to intervene and the patriarchs and some exemplary spirits of Judaism, such as the poet Jehuda Ben Halevy and the philosopher

Spinoza were called on to gather and give advice. All this is with the aim of giving back a land to the Jews. The action opens with the enthusiastic participation of David, a German Jew, in German affairs and the war, but also shows difficulties that prevented Jews from becoming properly established in Germany. David gradually becomes aware of these difficulties in conversations with his friend Christian, alias Bernhard Jacubowski. When he comes into contact with a French Jew who is closely affiliated to Zionism during the war, he realizes the limitations of Jewish life in exile. Then came the years of gradual marginalization and expulsion of Jews in Germany, leading to their persecution. In heaven, this persecution is seen as a ploy, albeit painful and dramatic, to make the Jews become aware of the pain of exile and force them to emigrate. "Only when life and possessions are at stake will they decide to take up their travelling staffs to find their last refuge in Eretz Yisrael,"[135] declared the Soul of the Land. David also emigrated to Palestine: "This could be the start of a new renaissance for the Jewish people,"[136] he says to Stella, who has joined him on Earth from heaven and is now his wife. In Palestine he acknowledged that "this land is more my homeland than the country where I was born."[137] Then comes the death of Stella and the proclamation of the State of Israel. Then David dies and joins Stella in heaven. In this imaginative play, heaven is joined to the Earth and persecution becomes salvation in the rediscovered true homeland of Palestine.

"We are happy . . . to live here, for better or for worse, even if the future is uncertain," he wrote in 1946 in a letter to his rediscovered friend, Bernhard Jacubowsky, who survived the war and with whom Mühsam was finally able to resume his long-lost friendship. While in Palestine, he continued to feel the lack of a true spiritual and artistic stimulus,[138] he did not want to even think about going back to Germany because he feared, as a Jew, running into discrimination and meanness and coming across the torturers and executioners who strolled around without a care in the world.[139] He nevertheless harbored no resentment and found no satisfaction in knowing that Germany was destroyed and on its knees. "We more or less survive on the little capital that we have," he told his friend.[140] He attributed his good age to fresh air and a healthy lifestyle: "I still go to swim at Beth Galim, but one cannot live on that alone. . . . What great fortune to be still alive and still able to write. The uncertainty was terrible."[141]

NOTES

1. P. Mühsam, *Erinnerungen, Betrachtungen, Gestalten*, Jerusalem 1959, p. 128. His daughter, Else Levi-Mühsam, would not remain in Israel and went back to Germany to curate her father's writings and memory.

2. Mühsam, in German: onerous, difficult. His surname was inherited from his forefather Pinkus Pappenheim who had fought as a volunteer in the Seven Years' War, where he distinguished himself for valiantly rescuing a Prussian officer. Frederick II gave him the name

because the king believed that it reflected the way in which Pappenheim had overcome obstacles in his past. This legend was the bedrock of what would become the important solid, rich, bourgeois Mühsam dynasty during the nineteenth century. Such a family was hardly likely to warm to someone like Erich, an anarchist socialist writer who devoted his life to various social ideals. Paul nevertheless always had a good relationship with his cousin Erich. On these aspects, see C. Hamann, *Die Mühsams. Geschichte einer Familie*, Jüdische Memoiren, Hentrich & Hentrich, Teetz 2005, particularly pp. 12–28, pp. 145–161, and G. Wolfram, *Paul Mühsam. Der Widerstand der Wörter. Ein Leben zwischen Deutschland und Palästina*, Hentrich & Hentrich, Teetz-Berlin 2006, pp. 12–15.

3. On this subject, see C. Hamann, *Die Mühsams. Geschichte einer Familie*, cit.
4. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, published by and with a postscript by E. Kretzschmar, Union Verlag, Berlin 1989, p. 38.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
7. See G. Wolfram, *Paul Mühsam. Der Widerstand der Wörter*, cit., p. 7.
8. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 38 et seq.
9. P. Mühsam, *. . . seit der Shöpfung wurde gehämmert an deinem Haus*, selection of works, published by Else Levi-Mühsam, with a foreword by Zenta Maurina, Seekreis Verlag, Constance 1970, p. 127.
10. In addition to numerous records, including poetry, of this subject, see also his late work P. Mühsam, *Die Gretchenfrage*, in Id., *Erinnerungen, Betrachtungen, Gestalten,* cit., pp. 144–149.
11. See P. Mühsam, *Der ewige Jude*, in Id., *. . . seit der Shöpfung wurde gehämmert an deinem Haus*, cit., pp. 181–182.
12. See on this subject P. Mühsam, *Mein Weg zu mir. Aus Tagebüchern*, published by and comments by Else Mühsam, foreword by Werner Volke, Hartung-Gorre Verlag, Constance 1992, pp. 159–160.
13. P. Mühsam, *. . . seit der Shöpfung wurde gehämmert an deinem Haus*, cit., p. 127.
14. P. Mühsam, *Mein Weg zu mir. Aus Tagebüchern*, cit., p. 168.
15. P. Mühsam, *Der ewige Jude*, in Id., *. . . seit der Shöpfung wurde gehämmert an deinem Haus*, cit., p. 180.
16. P. Mühsam, *Mein Weg zu mir*, cit., p. 171.
17. *Ibidem*.
18. His Landau cousins were Zionists and had moved from Lübeck to Haifa a few months previously. Charlotte, the wife of Leo Landau, was Erich Mühsam's sister. Their son Hans married Lotte, the daughter of Paul and Irma, and their son was born in Jerusalem in September 1934.
19. P. Mühsam, *Erinnerungen, Betrachtungen, Gestalten*, cit., p. 130.
20. P. Mühsam, *Mein Weg zu mir*, cit., p. 172.
21. *Ibidem*.
22. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 268.
23. Letter of 20 November 1933, from Haifa-Beth Galim, dla Marbach, A:Mühsam 81.133, without any indication of the recipient or page number.
24. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 173.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 266.
26. P. Mühsam, *Über sein Leben in Palästina*, dla Marbach, A:Mühsam 90.21.124.
27. P. Mühsam, *Über sein Leben in Palästina*, cit., p. 1.
28. *Ibidem*.
29. *Ibidem*.
30. *Ibidem*.
31. *Ibidem*.
32. *Ibid*., p. 2.
33. *Ibidem*.
34. *Ibidem*.
35. *Ibidem*.
36. *Ibidem*.

37. *Ibidem*.
38. *Ibid*., p. 3.
39. P. Mühsam, *Stimmungsbilder aus Palästina* (1933), dla Marbach, A:Mühsam 78.404, Issue I, p. 1. Not all of the *Stimmungsbilder* can be found in the Archive.
40. P. Mühsam, *Stimmungsbilder aus Palästina*, cit., Issue II, p. 1.
41. Mühsam devoted passages full of humor to the Palestinian flies, which was also a sign of his willingness and ability to adapt and his essentially light-hearted approach to his new life.
42. P. Mühsam, *Stimmungsbilder aus Palästina*, cit., Issue II, p. 1–3.
43. *Ibid*., p. 3.
44. *Ibid*., p. 4.
45. P. Mühsam, *Stimmungsbilder aus Palästina*, cit., Issue 11, p. 1.
46. P. Mühsam, *Stimmungsbilder aus Palästina*, cit., Issue 12, p. 1.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
48. *Ibidem.*
49. P. Mühsam, *Stimmungsbilder aus Palästina*, cit., Issue 17, p. 4.
50. P. Mühsam, *Stimmungsbilder aus Palästina*, cit., no issue number indicated, p. 2.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
53. P. Mühsam, *Über sein Leben in Palästina*, cit., p. 4. His memoirs published by his daughter, Else Levi-Mühsam, represent only a selection of the entire bequest.
54. P. Mühsam, *Stimmungsbilder aus Palästina*, cit., Issue 18, p. 1.
55. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 266. As we know, Scholem and Bergmann also lived in Rehavia.
56. *Logierhaus* has been translated as "boarding house".
57. P. Mühsam, *Mein Weg zu mir*, cit., p. 174.
58. P. Mühsam, *Erinnerungen, Betrachtungen, Gestalten,* cit., p. 131.
59. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., pp. 259–260.
60. P. Mühsam, *Erinnerungen, Betrachtungen, Gestalten*, cit., p. 131.
61. *Ibidem*.
62. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 287.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
64. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen*, Vol. 3, unpublished text kept in the Literary Archive in Marbach, Germany. dla Marbach, A:Mühsam 71.222, p. 512. The binder of memoirs is made up of five volumes. Mühsam considered the third volume, in which he described his arrival in the Land and his early years in Palestine up to the outbreak of World War II, to be the final chapter of his life.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 516.
66. P. Mühsam, *Mein Weg zu mir*, cit., p. 177.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 184.
68. P. Mühsam, *Erinnerungen, Betrachtungen, Gestalten*, cit., p. 131.
69. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen*, Vol. 3, dla Marbach, A:Mühsam 71.222, cit., p. 263.
70. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 295.
71. See P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen*, Vol. 3, dla Marbach, A:Mühsam 71.222, cit., p. 147.
72. P. Mühsam, *Mein Weg zu mir*, cit., p. 178–179.
73. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 266.
74. P. Mühsam, *Mein Weg zu mir*, cit., p. 178.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 272–273.
76. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 273.
77. See P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen,* Vol. 3, dla Marbach, A:Mühsam 71.222, cit., p. 320.
78. *Ibidem.*
79. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 272.

80. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen*, Vol. 3, dla Marbach, A:Mühsam 71.222, cit., p. 313; on this aspect see also P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 274.
81. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 271.
82. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen*, Vol. 3, dla Marbach, A:Mühsam 71.222, cit., p. 506.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
84. *Ibid.,* p. 143.
85. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 259.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 260.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
88. *Ibid.*, pp. 261–262.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 263.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 263.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 271.
93. P. Mühsam, *Erinnerungen, Betrachtungen, Gestalten*, cit., p. 132.
94. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 258.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 266.
96. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen*, Vol. 3, dla Marbach, A:Mühsam 71.222, cit., p. 209.
97. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
99. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 276.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 288.
101. I. Pappe, *Storia della Palestina moderna. Una terra, due popoli*, op.cit., p. 134.
102. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 288.
103. *Ibid.*, pp. 210–211.
104. See P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 449.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 449–450.
106. After the great Arab revolt in 1939, Malcolm MacDonald's White Paper published to diffuse Arab hostility toward the government of the Mandate considerably slowed Jewish immigration to Palestine and restricted the sale of land to Jews. A sketchy plan was drawn up for a unitary and independent Palestine state (mainly Arab) within a time span of ten years.
107. P.Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 463.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 450.
109. *Ibidem*.
110. *Ibid*., p. 451.
111. *Ibidem*.
112. P. Mühsam, *Mein Weg zu mir*, cit., p. 209.
113. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen. Lebenserinnerungen*, cit., p. 469.
114. *Ibidem*.
115. In Israel, he published *Sonette an den Tod*, and *Erinnerungen, Betrachtungen, Gestalten*, which came out in Jerusalem in 1949 and 1959, respectively.
116. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen*, Vol. 3, dla Marbach, A:Mühsam 71.222, cit., p. 286.
117. *Ibid*., p. 287.
118. *Ibidem*.
119. *Ibid*., p. 288.
120. *Ibidem*.
121. *Ibidem*.
122. *Ibid*., p. 289.
123. *Ibidem*.
124. *Ibid*., p. 289–290.
125. *Ibid*., p. 293.

126. For a brief historic overview of the characteristics and various forms of *Siedlungen*, and the part they played in Palestine, see W. Laqueur, *Der Weg zum Staat Israel*, cit., pp. 305–326, pp. 338–343, pp. 349–350.
127. P. Mühsam, *Erinnerungen, Betrachtungen, Gestalten,* cit., p. 135.
128. *Ibid*., p. 136.
129. P. Mühsam, *Mein Weg zu mir*, cit., p. 215.
130. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen*, Vol. 5, dla Marbach, A:Mühsam, 71.222, p. 1.
131. Mühsam reacted to his grief over the death of his wife by beginning to write poetry again, after his long significant break from poetic writing in Palestine. His collection *Sonette an den Tod* came out in Jerusalem in 1948.
132. P. Mühsam, *Der Stern Davids*. *Ein phantastisches Schauspiel in 16 Bildern*, dla Marbach, A:Mühsam 67. 232.
133. P. Mühsam, *Ich bin ein Mensch gewesen*, Vol. 5, dla Marbach, A:Mühsam 71.222, cit., p. 49.
134. P. Mühsam, *Der Stern Davids*, cit., p. 2.
135. *Ibid*., p. 45.
136. *Ibid*., p. 57.
137. *Ibid*., p. 60.
138. See E. Klin (edited by), *In alter, treuer Freundschaft*, correspondence between F.A. Voigt and P. Mühsam, selected and edited by E. Levi Mühsam and M. Pfeiffer-Voigt. With a preface by E.G. Schulz and an introduction by E. Klin, Bergstadt Verlag Wilhelm Gottlieb Korn, Würzburg 2005, p. 96.
139. P. Mühsam, *Warum ich nicht nach Deutschland zurückkehren möchte*, dla Marbach, A:Mühsam, so.21.118, without page numbers, sheet 1.
140. Letter to Bernhard 1946 dla Marbach A:Mühsam 8395/8, without page numbers.
141. *Ibidem*.

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About the Author

Claudia Sonino graduated in Milan, and has taught at the Universities of Trieste, Milan and Pavia. She has been working at the University of Pavia since 1988, where she taught German literature for a number of years and is now teaching modern and contemporary German literature. She has been awarded grants for research in Austria, Germany, and Israel, where she has lived for long periods of time. The grants were sponsored by these three countries through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DAAD—German Academic Exchange Service) and the PRIN Projects (Projects of Relevant National Interest). In 2000, she became a Fellow for Jewish Studies at the Moses Mendelssohn Zentrum (Potsdam, Germany). The results of her research there were published in national and international journals (*German Studies, German Culture, Menora, Naharaim)* and by national and international publishers (Il Saggiatore, Einaudi, Feltrinelli, Bruno Mondadori, De Gruyter, Quodlibet, Guerini e Associati). Sonino has also published a monograph in Germany. On four occasions between 1997 and 2006, she has been awarded grants as local coordinator of PRIN projects, sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and co-sponsored by the University of Pavia. She has organized and participated in several national and international workshops, and works as scientific referee for national projects and research conducted by MIUR (Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research). She is a blind peer reviewer for *German Studies*, and the referee of the editorial series of the Library of Modern Philology at the University of Florence.