



---

The 'Glorious Century' or the 'Cursed Century': Finde-Siecle Europe and the Emergence of Modern Jewish Nationalism

Author(s): Yaacov Shavit

Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 26, No. 3/4, The Impact of Western Nationalisms: Essays Dedicated to Walter Z. Laqueur on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday (Sep., 1991), pp. 553-574

Published by: [Sage Publications, Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/260660>

Accessed: 21/05/2012 05:49

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



*Sage Publications, Ltd.* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of Contemporary History*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Yaacov Shavit

## The 'Glorious Century' or the 'Cursed Century': *Fin-de-Siècle* Europe and the Emergence of Modern Jewish Nationalism

I longed to dwell in Europe, where I was born — but in vain. (Uri Zvi Greenberg, *In the Land of the Slaves* [Berlin 1923])

We — the youngsters of Israel — have experienced with all the warmth of our youth the life of Europe, its shakings, its anxieties. We were like a seismograph which records every slight tremor. ('Our Position in the Labour Movement', *Kehilatenu* [Our Community] 1922: 149)

**'For a continent that has been declared dead** many times during the last thousand years, Europe has shown a surprising capacity for survival. Prophets of doom have appeared and found a public eager to listen to their message, not just during the last generation or two, but throughout the history of European civilization . . . The age of European political predominance has ended, but no other centre has so far wrenched from Europe the torch of civilization. In a wider sense, the European age has only begun.'

This statement was written by Walter Laqueur in 1969, in the conclusion to his book *Europe since Hitler*, published in 1970. Three years after it was written, the oil crisis occurred as a result of the Yom Kippur War, and articles prophesying the decline of Europe and its political and moral surrender to the Third World and its oil and petro-dollars again became an almost dominant intellectual fashion. The oil embargo and the huge financial reservoir which backed it up were seen as the revenge of the Third World against European colonialism and imperialism. What the Muslim army failed to achieve before Poitiers and where the Ottomans failed before the walls of Vienna, petro-dollars succeeded. The decadent West, hedonistic and materialistic, now lost all its vitality and had no choice but to crawl on its knees. The pessimistic consciousness of the *fin-de-siècle*, the Cassandra-like prophesies of the previous century and the metaphor of the 'decline of the West' expressed the mood of the mid-1970s.

Professor Laqueur always stood outside this fashionable mood and the oil crisis did not change his views, which he expressed so concisely in the concluding paragraphs of his book. The 1980s confirmed his outlook; not only was Europe not in decline, she was reborn. In a historic upheaval which has an almost eschatological colouring — albeit without the violence usually attendant upon such a major transformation — Europe underwent deep structural and ideological changes. Europe at the twilight of the twentieth century seems nearer than at any time before to the ‘European utopia’. At any rate, we can no longer speak in terms of the decline of ‘European’ status or hegemony in world politics or within the scope of universal history. Neither can we speak about a cultural decline or the loss of European vitality.

This recreation of Europe, with the shattered Russian Empire in East and Central Europe on the one hand, and the reunification of Germany as a first-rate European power on the other, raised mixed opinions and ambivalent reactions in the Israeli and Jewish public. These reactions are in a certain sense a continuation and metamorphosis of the ambivalent reactions of the Jews to the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century,<sup>1</sup> and to the general history of the nineteenth century (i.e. European history). These popular reactions indeed created, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the typical patterns of response, inherent since then in the Jewish historical consciousness, formulating its attitude towards ‘Europe’ and the ‘West’ from the outset of the nineteenth century to the present. There are several reasons for the current ambivalent response. First and foremost, there are the contradictory attitudes towards the reunification of Germany and the awakening of nationalism and particularism in East and Central Europe on the one hand, and the collapse of communism on the other. But there is also another reason: the attitude towards ‘Europe’ very often plays a major role in debates concerning the future cultural orientation of Jewish-Israeli society and the nature, essence and content of modern Jewish culture. The prophesy and metaphor of ‘the decline of Europe’, and the negative image which derives from it, seem to strengthen those trends which argue in favour of cutting off cultural links with Europe, not only because of its recent diabolic history, but also as a result of its decadent nature, its rotten and degenerate values, and because its future is inevitably doomed. The ‘West’ is considered to be a sinking ship, while the ‘East’, this abstract, metaphorical construct, is considered by many as a real political and cultural entity,

fated to be victorious in the long run. No wonder, therefore, that the 'revival of Europe' began, even in a small measure, to occupy part of Israeli public opinion with regard to Israel's future cultural orientation and essence.

It seems right to speak of the fifth historical chapter of the Jewish web of interpretation and response to the European essence, characteristics and changes during the last 200 years. Almost a hundred years after the pessimism of the *fin de siècle* dictated part of the Jewish general mood, a new response is needed. Should the Jews welcome the revival of Europe with new expectations, or should they remember what it did not long ago and not let themselves be deceived once again?

The first historical chapter began during the years of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, which created the cornerstones of nineteenth-century Europe. Only in the eighteenth century, we must recall, did the idea of 'Europe' reach its peak and become a widespread *topos*. The Jewish response was mainly one of heightened expectations; high hopes from the 'new Europe' of the inevitable progress which, in due course, would open the gates to a new and better world for the Jews. The French Revolution was not the main cause of this optimism, but rather the reformist trends in the 'Enlightenment monarchies' in Europe. The 'Tolerance Edict' of Josef II (1782) rather than the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen was regarded as a sign of the new horizons. The first signs of pessimism both in the 'East' and 'West', as a result of and in response to different events, were already discernible in the 1870s.<sup>2</sup> The optimistic utopia of the Jewish Haskala had changed, within certain circles, into deep disappointment, which grew faster in the 1880s and thereafter. The response of the Jewish intelligentsia to the rise of modern anti-semitism thus became intertwined with the general mood of pessimism and was fed by it. They saw anti-semitism both as a major pathological symptom of the European essence and as a result of *fin-de-siècle* decadence. The different varieties of Jewish radicalism, including radical nationalism, were one of the sharp responses to this general *Kulturpessimismus*, and a manifestation of the conclusion which the Jewish intelligentsia drew from it. Eschatology of many types — revolutionary and national — was the reaction to the deep pessimism. It was an inevitable result of the eagerness to find redemption in the midst of a crisis. Therefore, it would be right to claim that the nationalism of the Jewish intelligentsia and semi-intelligentsia was not a product of great optimism,

but a result of deep disappointment and frustration, which sought compensation and new horizons. So high was the expectation, and so deep were the disappointments, that an alternate utopic-eschatological world-view was needed in order to replace the decaying ones and to provide adequate answers to the crisis. The disappointment with emancipation blended with the new negative attitude towards 'Europe', in which Jewish intellectuals longed to be rooted.

The third historical chapter opened after the first world war. It was manifested by a combination of the general reaction to the great war and its upheavals, and the mood of the 'decline of the West', which was strengthened after the war, and was accompanied by the belief that new vital civilizations were going to take the place of Europe. The deep influences of this intellectual mood on European politics and culture are well known. To this general background one should add the Jewish reaction to the great and bloody pogroms against the Jews in the East during the war and after.<sup>3</sup>

The fourth historical chapter began with the rise of nazism and needless to say, became a main issue on the Jewish agenda and in the Jewish world-view after the Holocaust. The question which engaged Jewish understanding of history in general and Western history in particular was: had Europe exposed its real face, its real nature, or was it only a part of it, only one layer of its entire entity? Was nazism an inherent feature of the 'European essence' or was it a diverted characteristic, an 'historical accident'? Since the late 1940s, this crucial question has occupied Jewish philosophy and polemics and has become a central topic within the Jewish *Zeitgeist*. The question, and the different answers given to it, shaped the world-view of the Jews and their attitudes towards the past, present and future history of the Jewish people (and its active behaviour in history).

The fifth historical chapter began in the late 1980s.

This article focuses on several manifestations from the second and third historical chapters — in other words, on the ambivalent reaction of modern Jewish nationalism to the pessimistic mood and formulations of the *fin de siècle* in Europe, and the conclusions it drew from this reaction. It is not the intention of this article to present the vast scope of these expressions and reactions. The main aim here is to present several characteristic responses, which serve as an illustration to the main argument.

The main argument is that while quite a large number of Jewish intellectuals and men of letters became nationalists in response to the pessimism of the *fin de siècle* and, by adapting its world-view, derived

radical national and cultural conclusions from it, Zionism as an organized, active, historical phenomenon, acting on the stage of modern history, was able to gain power and strength, and to achieve international status and momentum, mainly due to the fact that the Europe of the late nineteenth century was not a declining continent, but rather a world at its apogee — a Europe which shaped the world outside itself in almost every sphere of human life. Those who expressed a negative attitude to Europe in general were far from rejecting the basic components of European civilization (or ‘modernism’).

Hence, we are faced with a sharp contradiction, even a deep gap, between historical consciousness and moods of reaction and expression, feelings and attitudes, as were formulated and internalized in the self-awareness of the Jewish intelligentsia, in its ‘historical reality’ as ‘it really was’ and its cultural behaviour. It was Max Nordau who, perhaps more than any other Jewish intellectual of that period, profiled and canalized the nature of the prevailing *Kulturpessimismus* that emphasized the existence of a gap between a world-view and objective reality. Nordau claimed that the ‘mania of sadness’, in his own terms, of the fashionable pessimism, represented the victory of the imaginative forces over reality.<sup>4</sup> Such was also Auerbach’s criticism of Hess, when he wrote that Jewish intelligentsia tends to interpret the world in accordance with its own personal biography. In fact, what he had meant to say was that the sensitive threshold of the intellectual drives him to enforce his own biography on ‘history’ at large and to interpret it according to his own despair and expectations.<sup>5</sup> From the view-point of a provincial town (Tomshapol), Yehuda Leib Levin (Ya-a-llel) found that the consciousness of decadence was a mere fashionable sickness, by which the Jewish intelligentsia had been afflicted, under the influence of the Russian (and German) intelligentsia. In his view, it was an expression of a confusion of concepts and romantic daydreams, and the ardour with which Jews grab fashionable intellectual and literary ideas. It was a result of ‘a panic which had been transferred into boredom’.<sup>6</sup> He himself rejected the notion that Jews must sever their cultural links with Europe.

We should remember that a distinction must be made between the awareness of change and the more concrete descriptions of the society and culture in Europe at the crossroads of the nineteenth century. We must also be aware of the fact, already mentioned, that only during the eighteenth century did the concept of ‘Europe’ as a geographically

and culturally united entity take its place as a superstructure under which its divisions, differences and national diversity could exist.<sup>7</sup> The topic here is 'Europe' as a unity and uniformity, but Jews were, of course, well aware of the fact that every European culture had its own nature, and therefore approached each of them separately. The variety which is Europe, wrote Ber Borchof before the first world war, is under the threat of the German spirit.<sup>8</sup> The statement that 'Europe inevitably meant Germanness'<sup>9</sup> is not far from the historical truth, but fails to distinguish between different and contradicting images of 'German culture', and, of course, the influences of other European cultures. More than that, Jewish intellectuals were well aware of the existence of different layers of 'European culture'. The images of the different European cultures and the different attitudes towards them is a separate subject. Dealing with it, we should distinguish between the Jewish images of each and every culture, on the one hand, and the real contacts between Jewish culture and every European national culture on the other. However, it is not in any way astonishing to find Jewish intellectuals and writers in the front line of those who revere the 'general European culture'.

When the great Jewish historian, Simon Dobnow, a great believer in the prospect of recreating a new Jewish national life (a *Kulturnation*) within the framework of Eastern Europe before the second world war, portrayed the closing of the nineteenth century from the perspective of the watershed year of 1900, he wrote:

The nineteenth century, which began with a wave of glowing youthful hopes, came to a close worn out and enfeebled and in an esthetic and ethical condition described by the term *fin de siècle*. One of the powerful antitheses of Jewish history created by this turbulent century is now gradually drawing to its close.<sup>10</sup>

The radical shift from high optimism to the depths of pessimism signals the change from the optimism of the Haskala and radicalism, each of which in their turn believed in the integration of the Jews into the surrounding societies, either in a revolutionary mood, aspiring to be involved in the struggle to change those societies, or in a national mood, desperate for any future possibility of such integration. The shifts in attitude were indeed very sharp. For example, in 1863, one of the leading figures in the Haskala movement in Russia, Y.L. Gordon, who preached in favour of Jewish acculturation and integration in the tsarist empire, expressed his hopes in a famous poem. The land in

which we are born and dwell, he wrote, is now becoming part of Europe; this Europe is the smallest of all continents, but her wisdom is the most abundant. This elaborate paradise is opening its gates to the Jewish people, calling the Jews 'our brothers'. Jews must, therefore, accept this warm invitation and stop feeling like foreigners.<sup>11</sup> These longings for Jewish redemption, during the period which Leopold Zunz referred to as the *Erlösungsjahre*, were grounded in a belief in reform, not revolution. The hope for Jewish redemption in Russia was strongly connected to the belief that Russia had undergone a deep 'Europeanization' process and would very soon become an integral part of Europe. Europe, which symbolized (to use Kalman Shulman's description) the evil of all evils, the most brutal and murderous instincts of humanity, was now changing its nature, and new horizons had begun to open up wide and clear.<sup>12</sup> From this assumption rose the belief that under the enlightened rulers Jews would be safe and sound, since these rulers did not expect in return full-scale integration and the renunciation of their Jewish identity. For this reason, Jews must respond to this kindly gesture by behaving like trusting, obedient and good citizens. In the world-view of the *maskilim*, Europe was indeed the heart and centre of humanity. They adopted with excitement and expectation the idea of the 'white man's burden', and its Eurocentric outlook. Europe, wrote one Jewish newspaper in the middle of the century, willingly opens its heart and treasures for all humankind. It is ready to spread its wisdom and its many achievements in the far-off lands of India, China and Japan, being like dew to these far-away dry fields.<sup>13</sup> This was how a newspaper (which was published in the provincial town of Lück, on the border of Prussia and Russia) saw the 'new imperialism'.

Less than thirty years later, another Hebrew newspaper bitterly expressed its conclusion with regard to the deep crisis of Jewish optimism. Europe, the fortress of progress, had revealed itself as the bosom of the anti-semitic monster. This was the 'real' new Europe, the Europe that Jews worshipped, whose wisdom and education they praised, and in order to be accepted by whom they were ready to betray their most treasured national possessions.<sup>14</sup> Some of them found compensation in the theories which distinguished between the progress of civilization and the state of morality. There was no link, they claimed, between progress in the material sphere and the degenerate state of morality.



Our present, enlightened, educated age,  
 The glorious nineteenth century,  
 Is now the scene of every crime.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, in this painful, sarcastic verse, Y.L. Levin summarized the nineteenth century in his poem *Our Time Questions*. For him, it was a painful emotional departure from 'Europe', since as a 'westernized' Jew he did not find it easy to say farewell to 'Europe' and everything it represented. To depart from Europe was not a happy journey, he admitted. It was the abandonment of a place which was, from the Jewish side at least, 'a homeland'. The distinction he made between the progress of civilization and the degeneration of morality gave him a useful solution: it was possible to separate European progress and ethics. It was possible to stress the superiority of Jewish ethics, while adopting Europe's material achievements. This distinction was made by many non-western intellectuals and became a fundamental cornerstone in their response to the 'Western challenge'.<sup>16</sup> From this point of view, the grave and plain mistake of the *maskilim* of the first half of the nineteenth century was that they failed to understand that very often 'material civilization' is only a tool, and ethics are the driving force which determine the uses and aims of these tools. The negative aspect of European culture was encouraged by scientific and technological inventions and innovations, since instead of serving the cause of morality, they served as new and powerful tools for injustice, oppression and brutality. It was not 'European imperialism' in Asia or Africa which reflected this ugly face. From the viewpoint of the Jews in the provinces of tsarist Russia, the ugly face of Europe was reflected in its new anti-semitism. The 'wisdom of Europe' thus turned out to be a poison. Material inventions do not serve the salvation of mankind, but instead become means of oppression.

Another radical intellectual, M.Y. Berdizevski, from his Berlin vantage-point, expressed a similar, but far more pessimistic vision. It would take Palestine, he wrote in 1891, 500 years to reach the same level of culture that Russia presently enjoyed! Turkey was the cradle of savagery — and of witlessness. He also claimed that Russian Jews were merely building castles in Spain, dreaming that Western Europe was a paradise. The hard truth was that Western Europe, contrary to dreams and wishful thinking, was in reality a hard place to live; hard and depressed conditions of life prevailed: radical individualism, internal class struggle, national and political division and spiritual decadence. 'Those who say that in the West the sun is shining, are terribly mistaken.'<sup>17</sup> These are depressing words indeed, coming from

the pen of one whose point-of-departure was that the revival of Hebrew national culture was possible only in Palestine; from one who firmly believed that even national-cultural autonomy in Russia could not provide the Jews with the necessary framework for a real and deep cultural revival. If 'Europe' was far from being the ideal model, and Palestine under the Ottoman lay in the shadow of the deep and heavy darkness of the Middle Ages, what could a Russian Jew expect from the future?

It is clear that Jewish intelligentsia, both in the 'West' and in the 'East', saw in the nineteenth century a mirror of the nature and soul of the 'West' in general. Their verdict on the prospect of Jewish integration in this kind of Europe was negative. Since this Europe was a whole and total cosmos, they were forced to formulate a vision of a whole and total cultural alternative: the alternative of a Hebrew national culture as a new Jewish-Hebrew cosmos. Here lay their eagerness, desire and need to formulate the utopia of the Hebrew culture as a new Jewish mode of existence — a utopia which was too heavy a burden to carry.

We now briefly consider three responses by Jewish intellectuals. Although they came from different backgrounds, they each reached similar conclusions.

'Puves-vous nous deseuro-póiser?' — will we be able to discard our Europeanness? — so wondered the 'English lady', Heinrich Graetz's 'second voice'. 'Europeanism,' she mused, 'covers the whole Jewish field of vision.' It is an integral part of their essence. But what is the real nature of this Europe, she wondered rhetorically. Heinrich Graetz, in his response, did not hesitate to use the data of the new science of social statistics to portray European society as a sick society, a reflection and continuation of the ancient pagan cultures; corrupted and divergent from top to bottom. He sought to prove, utilizing the statistics of the spread of syphilis in Germany and the incidence of illegitimate births in Europe (in the same way, one may add, that Jewish writers today use the data on AIDS) to prove the utter immorality of contemporary 'Western culture'. Europe, Graetz wrote, was a hospital for the incurable, a terrible monster, a moribund culture, which would pass away very soon. There was no future for Europe, and only those who believed that salvation would rise from decay could really believe in its prospects. Beyond the magnificent façade of its artistic creations, behind the many shrines of

art and the palaces of science, the 'English lady' fully agreed with him, a great sickness was hidden: Europe was rife with many unknown sicknesses which corroded its soul. Was it not a depressing thought, she queried, that there could not be any compromise between the spirit of the Jew and the spirit of Europe? The inevitable conclusion must be, therefore, that in order to free themselves from this evil spirit, Jews must depart from Europe and sever all their links with it. Hence the drive to call for the 'revival of the Jewish race'.<sup>18</sup>

How remote is the spirit of these words from what Zunz wrote in the last chapter of his monumental study, *Die Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden: Historisch Entwickelt* (1892, second edition). Here Zunz identified the 'European spirit' and 'culture' with the 'German spirit' and German *Kultur*, and expressed his belief that *ex Germania lux*: the light should flow from now on, not from Babylon, but from Germany — the *Vaterland*, where her citizens would combine wisdom, patience, industriousness and honesty in a fine mixture, where side by side with legal equality and the indulgence of culture, the emancipation of the Jews, both civil and spiritual, would progress unimpeded.<sup>19</sup> This utopia, as is well known, shaped the world-view of German Jews during the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. They urged their fellow Jews to shed their 'Asiatic' characteristics and to become 'true and full Europeans'. Indeed, it is hard to find more illuminating illustrations of a simultaneously pessimistic and optimistic response to the *fin-de-siècle* mood. However, we must not forget that Graetz's conclusions were far from radical. In spite of his intellectual and aesthetic dislike of and recoiling from 'Europe', he was very far from any readiness to 'divorce Europe'. The question posed by the 'English lady' — can the Jews sever their European roots? — was answered with a negative. Graetz and the Jewish world he represented could not really give a convincing positive answer.

Lilienblum is a different case. He was by no means a 'westernized' Jew in his convictions and beliefs, far from the mystic-exotic nuances of some of his Jewish contemporaries. He was never taken with the idea that 'the East' could be a substitute for 'Europe' as a cultural environment. Indeed, he drew a sharply negative portrait of Europe, comparing it to decadent Rome, replete with blood and fiery beastly passions. Europe of the Middle Ages and of our times is a licentious culture, he wrote time and again. Turning Zunz's optimism into a pessimistic vision, and Graetz's pessimistic outlook into ideology, Lilienblum's radical conclusion was that there was a crucial need for a

real national and cultural revival of the Jewish people in Palestine. But in contrast to the admirers of the 'East', who were inspired by some of the Slavophiles of their time,<sup>20</sup> and despite what he himself wrote against Europe, Lilienblum never saw in the 'East' a desirable alternative. He claimed that Judaism had to demolish its windows to the 'West' to let the cobwebs blow away for ever. But these windows he wished to open wide in Palestine. Only there could 'open windows' not turn out to be open gates to assimilation. No wonder he found himself struggling on three fronts: with those who believed that the modernization of the Jews was possible only in Europe; with those who believed that America offered the only escape from both Russia and the 'East',<sup>21</sup> and with the Orthodox Jews who hoped for an Orthodox conservative Jewish society in Eretz Israel.

Y.L. Levin reached the same conclusion. In a series of articles he published in *Ha-Meliz* during April–May 1899, entitled 'The End of the Century', he discussed Simon Bernfeld's article, which was published in *Lu-ach Ha-Chi-Asaf* the same year.<sup>22</sup> Bernfeld, according to the 'Nietzschean fashion' of the time, claimed that the origins of the nineteenth century's sickness lay in the victory of democracy all over Europe. The new political culture had given birth to a mass culture which lacked real education (i.e. real *Bildung*). Bernfeld thus only repeated the fear and even horror with which many European intellectuals and literati greeted the emergence of 'mass culture' and of the 'masses' on the stage of history. As a radical *maskil* and even a populist, Levin firmly rejected the characterization of democracy as the realm of degenerate culture and the source of evil and sin. He truly believed that the real cause of the nineteenth century's sickness was the deep gap created between mind and soul, that is, between the rational and the irrational. The deterioration of the century, he went on to argue, was a result of the 'assault of passion and the petrification of the mind'. This gap was increased by the effect of the many innovations and achievements of this century in every sphere of life. It was not the 'rule of the mob' which was the cause of all troubles, rather the fact that the vast majority of the population, who, until recently, were guided by morality (i.e. religion), had been corrupted by modern 'materialistic secularism'. He rejected the slogan of the 'danger of the masses' and the description of its effects on 'culture', since Jewish history proved that the 'masses' could be dominated by morality and knowledge of the *Torah* (the Laws of Moses, i.e. its moralistic values). At any rate, he totally accepted the description of contemporary Western culture as degenerate, full of despair and

emptiness. The salvation of the Jews, therefore, would only be achieved by 'national romanticism', by the so-called 'volkish revival' of the 'national soul' in its 'motherland' — the resurrection of the 'Hebrew soul'.

Jewish literature of the late nineteenth century is full of this kind of bitterly negative criticism of Europe. It blended the pessimism of the *fin de siècle* and the horror of the cold, threatening emptiness of existence as expressed by different trends in the European world-view, with Jewish reaction to the new European anti-semitism which appeared in the 1880s. Paradoxically, but logically, it was the Jewish intelligentsia and semi-intelligentsia, the most 'westernized' group within Jewish society, that created the most demonic image of Europe. However, this demonic image did not cause them to turn away from Europe. On the contrary, their first encounter with the realities of Palestine of the late nineteenth century only sharpened and strengthened their European outlook. Europe became a 'lost cultural paradise'.

On 21 September 1882, Vladimir Dubnow, a young member of BILU (one of the first modern Zionist movements), wrote from Jafa to his elder brother, the historian Simon Dubnow, in Petersburg:

Newspapers are so rare here that it is even impossible to know what is going on in Turkey itself. We are all walking in the dark. To sum up, here is wild Asia and not cultured Europe, which every day becomes more and more precious to me.<sup>23</sup>

A brief impression of the Palestinian scene was sufficient to impress him, and what he saw was automatically translated in terms of the common topos of the 'wilderness of Asia'. These longings for 'Europe' were expressed, we must recall, not by immigrants who had left behind the centres of Western European culture, but very often by those who came from small towns in Eastern Europe. However, from their point of view they were Europeans in every sense. These expressions are to be found in the literature of the First *Aliya*, the second *Aliya* and thereafter. From its outset, the new Jewish society was urged to model itself on 'European standards'.<sup>24</sup> Thus, even a radical nationalist was unable to divest himself of all that 'European culture' presented and meant to him. The geographic remoteness of Europe transformed its many flavours into treasured memories, since the common, ordinary and daily became rare and precious.

One of the major challenges a radical nationalist had to face was the need first to refute and then to convince his anti-national and anti-Zionist opponents, who promoted acculturation and integration in Europe, that departure from 'Europe' was by no means exile to a 'cultural wilderness'. Time and again he argued that 'Europe' was a 'portable culture' and could be carried away to Asia and planted there: a Jewish-European island in the midst of the 'East'.

For the modern, westernized Jew, Europe was not only the Europe of the 'big ideas', of humanism, liberalism, etc., but the Europe of everything that meant culture: libraries and art galleries, modern schools and houses, medicine and electricity, and so forth. In other words, the 'westernized' Jew held the opposite view to that which claimed that 'a civilization cannot simply transplant itself, bag and baggage' outside its 'natural space', and believed that such a 'transplantation' was possible.<sup>25</sup>

I'm convinced that you too will share my view that the genuine works such as those of Heine, Schiller, Börne, Goethe, Lessing and others will still be of world interest hundreds of years from now, and that we, who are cut off from European civilization, need them in order to rest while reading them and to meditate after our hard day's work — they, the great and sincere friends of humanity.<sup>26</sup>

The missing books (this letter was written in 1887) were of course only one aspect of Europe, a central aspect indeed, but not the only one. The departure from Europe and the settling in the 'desert of the East' was considered an existential necessity, and not always an act of free will and free choice, a fact that was a driving force behind the visions of a total renaissance of the Jewish existence in Palestine.

Uri Zvi Greenberg, the poet who was imbued with an apocalyptic, pessimistic outlook and who declared his hatred towards 'Europe', gave an illuminating example of this ambivalent attitude:

We ought to go  
 The lands cried out under our feet . . .  
 We ought to hate what we loved so dearly  
 We have loved the wood, the stream, the well, the mill  
 We have loved the falling leaves, the fishes, the bucket and the  
*halla*, and in deep secrecy we have loved their bell-ringing  
 We have loved the harmonica, flute and Ukrainian folk-songs, the  
 village girls in their dancing with their coloured ribbons  
 We have loved the white shed with the straw gardens and the red roofs,  
 We have loved deeply the smokey hours in the coffee shops,  
 And operas, parks, a perfumed head and dancing places. Opium.

Ballet. Boulevards and brothels  
And electricity, museums of antiquities and city libraries . . . <sup>27</sup>

It is indeed a desperate and painful love-cry. This longing for Europe is transfigured into a vision of a Hebrew revival and a whole Hebrew universe. This universe or cosmos included all the features and characteristics of Europe: of rural Europe with its village and country 'organic life', of urban, bohemian, educated, licentious Europe — nothing was missing! This cultural eschatology was needed, since the culture of the 'westernized Jews', and mainly the Jewish intelligentsia left behind, was indeed a 'whole world', toward which they felt deep historical and cultural linkage, and since the alternative culture they intended to create was as yet only an imaginary one.

However, despite his Europhobia, Greenberg often proclaimed that his model of organic-national culture was a European model, mainly Slavic (and communist). When he referred to the cultures of East European nations, he stressed the fact that all of them were 'natural cultural entities'. And how he envied them this! They had the 'natural roots' that Jews now had to grow in a hurry. When he referred to the 'East', and the 'Hebrews' returning to their 'Eastern natural birth-place and natural historical environment', he used 'Western images' of the 'East', created and formulated by European conservative romantics and mystics in the 'West' as well as in the Russian literature of the late nineteenth century.

It must be stressed at this point that this mystical longing for the 'magic East', which possessed the secret cure to all the sickness of the soul of the 'West' and of Judaism, was a reaction and perception of the few, and had only a marginal influence on cultural behaviour. The 'East' they raised in necromancy was an imaginary entity, and not a 'real' and concrete one. Very often its Islamic nature was not mentioned, as if it did not exist. Yaacov Rabinovitz, in a very sarcastic and sharp article, pointed to the fact that the Jewish intelligentsia who expressed 'reactionary-European' notions about 'the return to the East', did not take their own phrases and slogans seriously, and had no intention of 'living in the East', that is to say, of adopting 'the Eastern ways of life'. They would always prefer to live in the 'East' as Europeans.<sup>28</sup> Those who sought 'spiritual salvation' in the 'East' of their pure imagination were ignoring the real character of 'Eastern society' and 'Eastern culture'. They were idealistic and reactionary. The paradox lay, therefore, in the fact that 'escape' from

Europe to the 'Eden of the East' represented one of the many 'European components' of the Jews as 'Western Jews' (the usage of the term 'East' by itself is evidence of this).

Herzl, one of the outstanding 'westernized' Jewish intellectuals and leaders of the national movement, pointed very clearly to the central role of daily life as an integral part of 'culture'. 'East' and 'West' were not only two different metaphors or two contradicting topoi, but were real and dynamic differing complexes of everyday life, of 'culture' as human environment. In a paragraph which, from a historical perspective may be regarded as naive and even pathetic, Herzl wrote that daily habits were portable and could be transplanted from one place to another. Not only ideas, laws and beliefs could be taken in one's travelling-bag, but also one's 'small habits'. The history of colonization movements, certainly in the modern age, provided solid and indisputable evidence of this, and explained why Herzl had no difficulty in portraying the establishment of a modern European Jewish society in Palestine. His Europe was not only the Europe of trains, theatres, parliaments, art galleries, electricity, etc., nor was it an 'organic Europe'. It was a Europe of daily life, containing the many things people were used to, all of which were included in the 'fleshpots' that Jews would not leave behind in Europe. In the *Judenstaat*, Herzl therefore stressed the fact that modern technology was used everywhere mainly in order to transplant these 'small habits' to the new homelands: there were English hotels in Egypt and on the top of the mountains in Switzerland, Viennese-style coffee-shops in Latin America, French theatre in Russia, German operas were performed in North America, and the best Bavarian beer was to be found in Paris! In leaving Egypt behind, he declared, we would not forget the 'fleshpots of Europe'. We would take them with us.<sup>29</sup>

By this Herzl intended not only to calm those who feared that leaving Europe would mean leaving behind for ever all that was so dear to the bourgeois Jew, whose main concerns were his daily comforts and conveniences. Certainly, he never saw himself as advocating 'cultural colonization', i.e. transplanting a certain 'culture' from its 'natural place' to a strange, alien environment and imposing it on a place (and its people) where it did not belong. His main aim was not only to gain the support of middle-class Jews, but to reject the common and widespread theory that there existed a deterministic linkage between a place and a culture, and that as a result of this linkage, the creation of a Jewish culture in Asia would not mean the creation of an 'Asiatic Jewish culture'. Cultures, Herzl



voiced very clearly, were man's creations, and it was the human spirit and human initiative which gave a place its identity and character. It was culture that endowed a place with its uniqueness and not the other way round. Therefore, for the 'West', the 'East' was not a geographic border.

As is well known, Herzl was branded 'messianic' or 'utopian' and certainly as one who held 'European prejudices'. Eurocentric he was indeed, but at the same time he was far more realistic than many of his contemporary critics, for whom the question of modern Jewish *Kultura* was the main concern. For them, culture meant mainly ideas, values, an organic whole, spirit, etc., while for Herzl it was a dynamic complex of human existence and environment in its total scope and its many aspects. His concept of culture was not an idealistic and abstract one, like that of most of his critics. At the same time, his notion of modernity was also not of a poetic nature. He was very well acquainted with the nature of modern, urban-industrial society.

Herzl did indeed draw a very clear picture of the political, economic and social structure of Western civilization at the *fin de siècle*. He emphasized the influence of 'mass politics' on political culture, the conflict between capital and work, the hard conditions of the working class, etc. He even drew a parallel between the European proletariat and the Jews. Both were longing for salvation and were thus prone to utopias or visions which promised them redemption in the near future. He even went as far as to argue that it was impossible to predict what kind of misery would emerge from these future remedies, and had some doubts concerning the influence of advanced technology on modern society. He was not a simple-minded utopian who believed in modern progress. But while he was very cautious about the prospects for socialism and the chances of success in constructing a 'new world', he was very strong in his conviction that the prospects for Zionism were bright. It is correct to describe his Zionism as 'scientific Zionism' (on the model of 'scientific socialism').<sup>30</sup> He firmly believed that the new forces created by man during the nineteenth century could be used in the service of progress and humanity. Zionism, in his view, was composed of national aspirations and social longings made possible by the power of science and technology. In other words, while he was very pessimistic about the prospect of a 'European utopia', he believed in the reality of the 'Zionist utopia'. Without trains, steam-power, electricity, etc., the

mass migration of the Jews would remain a day-dream, and the creation of modern Jewish society only a vision. Zionism was the offspring of modern Europe, and was an active national — and social — force because it acted within the modern world, adopting and using its skills and inventions. If Herzl was messianic, his was a scientific messianism. His utopia could become a reality only through scientific messianism. *Fin-de-siècle* Europe was a creative force which changed the world around it, and the Zionist revolution was part of this revolutionary change. His optimism, therefore, originated in a deep belief in modernity and in the new human horizons it opened up. Only against this background would the Jews be able to forge through to new horizons.

**In the limited space available**, it is impossible to give even a brief survey of the romantic longings and their expression in the Hebrew literature of that period. There were two types of romanticism. One embodied a longing for the landscape of Europe. ‘My dreams ripened among pines, not among palms,’ wrote a Jewish German intellectual. ‘When we worked in the fields, some of us felt deep longings for the misty woods of Europe and their bubbling damp,’ wrote a young pioneer in 1922.<sup>31</sup> The second was a new Eretz-Israeli romanticism, trying to create deep intimate linkage with the new landscape and its nature. In both types we can easily recognize the longing for an ‘organic whole’, and the eagerness to create an intrinsic, atavistic affinity to the land.<sup>32</sup> However, all these expressions were a mirror, and a manifestation, of only one dimension of their world-view. No less powerful were their strivings for modernity — modernity as a superstructure on the basis of this new-born atavism and organic *Weltanschauung*. The socialist and liberal visions of modern society were no less influential than the romantic mood. Industrialization was just as important and decisive a factor as were the new feelings towards landscape and nature. Zionist romanticism did not turn out to be Zionist primitivism. What Frankel defines as the ‘advantages of backwardness’<sup>33</sup> must be understood as the advantages of building, without any ‘outside’ interference, a new and modern society — and not a primitivist one, rejecting modernity. One of the fundamental myths of the modern Jewish *Weltanschauung* was the Promethean myth: the myth of a collective effort to change nature and to ‘conquer’ it in order to build in this backward province the most advanced society.

We must remember that literature and literary works, with their

romantic mood of expression, are often misleading in this connection. Our historical reading must carefully distinguish between mood, images and modification of reality, and the real cultural process and development. Many contemporary plans reflect very clearly the wide vision of progress and modernity of that period. The real *Weltanschauung* of Jewish society in Palestine was a complex combination of romanticism and modernity, and the foundations and the structure of its culture were modern indeed. The anti-European motifs were marginal and had no influence. Y.H. Brenner clearly understood this when he wrote that 'we want the culture of the Gentiles in our streets, on our land, within our people, and what we were intended to do if we were to mix among them, we are ready to do by ourselves, according to our own ways'.<sup>34</sup>

For the major part of the Jewish intelligentsia, the West of *fin-de-siècle* Europe was the model for a modern Jewish society. They rejected romanticism and anti-Westernism and cleaved to the idea that Zionism was the only way to achieve 'acculturation without assimilation'. The great historical advantage of Palestine lay in the unique opportunity it gave to transfer and transplant 'Europe' to the 'East', while selecting its positive components and rejecting the negative ones. Zionists were the pioneers of Western civilization in the East. In other words, only in Palestine would the national Jews become 'real Europeans'.

These notions and concepts underwent several changes between the two world wars, not to say after the Holocaust. However, beyond the mood and the formulation of expressions and ideas exists the 'cultural reality'. Jewish society was created and institutionalized during the period of *fin-de-siècle* Europe as a modern European society. Most of its institutions, norms and values were based on European models.

Here indeed we face a paradox: a society which was created by, among other forces, the pessimistic response to *fin-de-siècle* Europe, and by a sharp critique of the values Europe represented, was, from the outset, a European society in essence and in framework. So strong was the Jewish bond with Europe that even the Holocaust was unable to sever it. There was no fleeing from Europe, and the different efforts to escape from it merely emphasize this deep link, and the impossibility of cutting off its roots and its heritage.<sup>35</sup>

## Notes

This article is part of a study in the history of 'cultural models' in modern Jewish perception. It was written when relations between the 'Jews' and 'Europe' were taking a new step: the 'shadow of the Holocaust' was fading in European public opinion, the mass immigration of Jews from Russia to Israel might bring down the curtain on the presence of Jews in Russia, and would thus accomplish the mass Jewish emigration from Russia which began in the 1880s, and many Jews felt a deep new affinity toward 'the world of their forefathers' in Eastern Europe.

I should like to thank Jeffery Kaplan of the University of Chicago Committee on the History of Culture for his editorial assistance in the preparation of this article.

1. Samuel Verses, 'Hamaapekchah Hazarfait baaspaklaryah shel asifrut aivrit' (The French Revolution in the Mirror of the Hebrew Literature), *Tarbiz. Quarterly for Jewish Studies*, 54, April–September 1989, 483–521. I am indebted to Samuel Feiner for his yet unpublished studies on the attitude of modern Jewish historiography toward the French Revolution.

2. The pessimistic mood of the Jewish radical intelligentsia in Russia was the result of 'minor' events, such as the pogroms in Odessa in 1871, the expulsion of the Jews from Kiev in 1872, etc.

3. It is worth mentioning here that Jewish literati in the second historical chapter did not write under the influence of Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes: Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte* (*The Decline of the West*), which appeared between 1917 and 1922 (the English translation appeared between 1926 and 1928), but they were surely impressed by other literary echoes of this pessimistic mood and mainly by D.S. Merezhkovsky's *On the Causes of the Decline of Russian Literature and its New Trends* (*O princhinka upadka i o novykh tecniika sovremennoi russki literaty*, 1893). This book had a great influence on modern Hebrew literature of that period. See Hamotal Bar-Yosef 'Bialik vesirah arusit' (Bialik and Russian Literature) *Moznayim*, 62, nos 9–10 (May–June 1990). See B. Glatzer Rosenthal, 'Stages of Nietzscheanism: Merezhkovsky's Intellectual Evolution' in Glatzer Rosenthal (ed.), *Nietzsche in Russia* (Princeton 1986), 69–93. See also Andrzej Walicki's studies on the Slavophiles and the westernizer in the second half of the nineteenth century in Russia and the anti-Enlightenment trends there, *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Oxford 1980), esp. chaps 4, 6; and his *The Slavophile Controversy* (Oxford 1975). However, the Jewish intelligentsia could not accept the anti-Western ideas which gained some credibility in Germany. See Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley, CA 1962). See also K.W. Swart, *The Sense of Decadence in Nineteenth-Century France* (The Hague 1964); Saul Friedlander, 'The Nineteenth Century and the End of Mankind', *Smanim — A Historical Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 2 (January 1980), 16–25; P. Mendes-Flohr, 'Fin de Siècle Orientalism and the Aesthetics of Jewish Self-Affirmation' in *Mehkarei Yerushalym bemahshevet Israel* (*Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought*), vol. 3, no. 4 (1983–4), 623–82. Carl G. Schorske, *Fin De Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York 1981); Peter J. Bowler, *The Invention of Progress: The Victorians and the Past* (Oxford 1989), 192–201 ('Progress and Degeneration').

4. Max Nordau, *Paradoksim* (the Hebrew translation of *Paradoxes* [1885] by Dov Stock, Tel Aviv 1930), 5–25. See also Nordau's *Hasekarim amuskamim shel aenoshut*

*atarbutit* (the Hebrew translation by H. Goldeberg of *Die conventionellen Lugen der Kulturmenschheit* [1883], Tel Aviv 1930), 182–3. Nordau portrays Western decadence, but at the same time believes in the possibility of change and progress.

5. Quoted in Jonathan Frankel, *Prophesy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism and the Russian Jews, 1862–1917* (Cambridge 1981), 48. He wrote: '... You take the stages of the development of your personalities and your momentary thought processes very easily for the development of the actual period and real world.'

6. Yehuda Leib Levin, 'Pirkei zikhronot' (Memories) in Yehuda Slutsky (ed.), *Zikhronot vehegyonot (Memories and Reflections)* (Tel Aviv 1968), 81–2.

7. Denys Hay, *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea* (Edinburgh 1968); Jurgen Fischer, *Oriens, Occidens, Europa: Begriff und Gedenke 'Europa' in der späteren Antike und im frühen Mittelalter* (Wiesbaden 1957).

8. Quoted in Matityahu Mintz (ed.), *Mikhtavei B. Borochov* (B. Borochov's Letters 1897–1917) (Tel Aviv 1990), 615.

9. Quoted from an article by Robert Weltsch in George L. Mosse, 'Influence of the Volkish Idea on German Jewry' in *Germans and Jews* (Detroit 1987), 78. See also Mosse's remarks on the influence of the atmosphere of the *fin de siècle* on the acceptance of the volkish ideas all over Europe. These ideas were also adopted by the new Jewish national *Weltanschauung*.

10. Simon Dubnow, 'Autonomism, the Basis of the National Program' in S. Dubnow, *Nationalism and History, Essays on Old and New Judaism*, edited with an introductory essay by Koppel S. Pinson (Philadelphia 1959), 131. See Dubnow note on the 'law of the evolution of *Weltanschauungen*, the law of spiritual progress', *ibid.*, 131–2.

11. *Kol shirei Judah Leib Gordon* (Tel Aviv 1956, 3rd edn), 17.

12. Kalman Shulman, *Sefer divrei yemei olam* (Vilna 1875, 2nd edn), part 4, 19–20.

13. See Yaacov Shavit, 'Halonot laolam' (Windows on the World), *Qesher*, no. 4 (1988), 3–10. (These quotes are from the newspaper *Hamagid* of 1858.)

14. See Jehuda Leib Winz's article 'Haskalat hameah a-tshsa esreh vetikvat Isira'el be Ashkenaz' (The Enlightenment of the 19th Century and the Hope of Israel in Germany), *Hameliz* (7 March 1896). He stressed the fact that anti-semitism became popular in Germany, 'the country which stood in the front line of our age of Enlightenment'.

15. The poem *Sheelot azman* was reprinted in Levin's *Zikhronot ve hegyonot*, *ibid.*, 140–3.

16. See his articles on H.T. Buckle's concepts of morality and progress which are summarized in my article 'Hashimush shel maskilim yehudiim bemisrach Eropah bemisnato shel H.T. Buckle' (The Works of Henry Thomas Buckle and their Application by the Maskilim of Eastern Europe), *Zion*, 49, no. 4 (Jerusalem 1984), 401–12. On the same attitude of Muslim thinkers see, for example, Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago 1982), 43–83. These Arab thinkers wished also to distinguish knowledge (philosophy) from the practical technological spheres.

17. This letter was recently published in Avner Holzman (ed.), *Ginzei Mikhah Yosef Berdichevski* (Holon 1990), 16–19.

18. I used Yerhuham Tolqus's Hebrew translation of the 'Correspondence of an English Lady on Judaism and Semitism' (Stuttgart 1883) in Shmuel Ettinger (ed.), H. Graetz, *Darkei hahistoryiha haiyehudit* (Jerusalem 1969), 126–76. And see also Graetz's article 'The Rejuvenation of the Jewish Race', *ibid.*, 103–9. See the English

translations in Ismar Schorsch's collection of Graetz (The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York 1975), 141–50, 191–258. Graetz thought that Europe must be considered as the main seat of Judaism (and not Russia). On the background of the 'Briefwechsel' see Schorsch, 59–60, note 152, and on Graetz's use of 'Moralstatistik' see *ibid.*, 311, note 6.

19. There is a vast literature on the German–Jewish optimistic outlook and attitude during the last half of the nineteenth century and therefore I feel no need to suggest references to the literature on this subject.

20. See also Shlomo Breiman (ed.), *Mikhtavei Moshe Leib Lilienblum le Yehuda Leib Gordon* (Lilienblum's Letters to Gordon) (Jerusalem 1968), 198–203. See also Lilienblum's autobiography, *Kietvei M.L. Lilienblum*, vol.2, 1874 (Jerusalem 1970), 148. There he writes about the 'loathsomeness of Europe'.

21. On Lilienblum's debate with David Frishman (who argued that Jews should emigrate to America and not to Asia, the symbol of enlightenment, freedom, good, etc., 'since the spirit of *haskala* moves from East to West and will cross now the ocean to reach the "West"'), see Yoshef Klausner, *Historia sel Ha-Sifrut Ha-Evrit Ha-Hadasha* (*History of Modern Hebrew Literature*), vol. 4 (Jerusalem 1953), 280–1.

22. S. Bernfeld's article was published in *Luah Ahiasaf*, 3–42.

23. Quoted in Shulamit Laskov (ed.), *Ketavim letoldot Hibat Zion veyisuv Eretz Israel* (*Documents on the History of Hibbat Zion and the Settlement of Eretz Israel*), vol. 1, 1870–1882 (Tel Aviv 1982), 504.

24. In the 'Documents', and other contemporary literature, there are many references to the need for 'European standards'. See, for example, the memorandum of BILU headquarters in Istanbul from June 1882, *ibid.*, 367. The memorandum speaks about the 'updated results' of European science and culture. The German colonies in Palestine were models of 'European villages'.

25. Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 2, translated by Sian Reynolds (New York 1966), 770. Here Braudel expresses his 'organic concepts', but he also believes that culture can be transferred, not by anonymous carriers, but by organized conscious enterprise.

26. Quoted in Dov Schidorsky, *Sifria vesefer beEretz Israel Be selhai ha tekufah aosmanit* (*Libraries and Books in the late Ottoman Palestine*) (Jerusalem 1990), 103.

27. Uri Zvi Greenberg, 'Yerushalayim shel matah', *Eimah gedolah veyareah* (*Poems*) ('The Earthy Jerusalem', *Grey Fear and the Moon*) (Tel Aviv 1925), 55. Europe, he wrote, cannot bear Jews anymore, 'Therefore I give her back my Perac [evening dress], my tie, my laka-shoes [patent leather shoes], and also my graveyards . . .'

28. Yaacov Rabinovitz, 'Al mizrah vemaarav' (On East and West), *Hatekufah*, no. 17 (Elol/September–October 1921), 443–54. See also Zeev Jabotinsky's articles 'Hamizrah' and 'Hamizrah Haziuri' (The East and The Pictorial East) from 1926 and 1932, re-printed in Yosef Nedava (ed.), *Ekront manhim lebeayot asaaha* (*Principal Foundations for Current Problems*) (Tel Aviv 1981), 90–6, 97–100. Jabotinsky not only emphasised the 'European nature' of Jewish civilization, but, like many others, stressed the fact that 'European civilization' itself has fundamental 'Jewish' components.

29. I used M. Yoeli's Hebrew translation of Herzl's *Medinat ayehudim* (Tel Aviv 1978), 55 ('Hergelim ketanim' — 'small habits').

30. See Herzl's articles from his 'Parisian Period' in *Heikkhal Bourbon-miBoulanger ad Dreyfus 1891–1895* (*From Boulanger to Dreyfus*), vols 1–3 (Jerusalem 1974), mainly the articles from August 1893 (vol. 2, 522), and December 1891 (vol. 1, 48). See also

Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford 1981).

31. Moses Calvary (in 1912–13), quoted in Mosse, *ibid.*, 94.

32. *Kehilatenu: Kovez hagut lebetim vemaavayi haluzim (Our Community: Collection of Reflections, Exertions and Longings of Pioneers)*, 1922, introduction and annotations by Moki Zur (Jerusalem 1988), 277. This collection of testimonies is saturated with reflections about the nature and the destiny of Europe and the linkage between the Jews and Europe. At the same time the writers express their hopeless desire to reach in Palestine the 'cultural stage' of Europe, and portray 'Europe' as an 'old', 'cursed' continent; they long for European landscape (regard the 'East' as a region somewhere behind the Sambation River), and try to create a 'natural' linkage to the new unknown and different landscape of Palestine. *Ibid.*, 136–7, 181, etc. Another type of rural romanticism (based on Eastern European model); see, for example, David Ben-Gurion's memories from his life in Galilee, 'Bi yehudah uvaGalil: Kitei zkhronot' (In Judea and Galilee: Fragments of Memories) in *Anahnu vekhineinu (We and our Neighbours)* (Tel Aviv 1931). See Motolensky's criticism of this 'reactionary romanticism' in *Haahdut (The Unity)*, no. 35 (June 1911). If romanticism moves from the sphere of poetry to the 'real world', it can endanger the ideal of progress, this critic wrote.

33. Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, chap. 8, 366–452. In this backwardness he sees an 'advantage', since the pioneer socialists in the USA comprise only a national and class minority within American society. However, since most of them envisioned a modern Jewish society and not a rural-agricultural one, this backwardness was also a hard and insurmountable obstacle.

34. Y.H. Brenner, 'Bahayim u basifrut' (I in Real life and in Literature) in *Kol kitvei Y.H. Brenner (Y.H. Brenner's Writings)*, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv 1960), 61. See also Frankel, 89. Zalman Epstein wrote: 'We have lived to hear . . . words worthy of Asakov and his school which pours out abuse against the west and all its Enlightenment'. Lilienblum expressed this common view by writing that only in Palestine would Jews be able to adapt 'European civilization' without being forced to become only 'Benei Dat Moshe' — that is, Jews by religion only. In Palestine they would be able to graft the twig of Yapeth onto the genus of Israel.

35. On this chapter, and the more recent one, I intend to write separately in a forthcoming article, 'The "New Germany" and the "New Europe" as an Old-New "Jewish Problem" '.

#### Yaacov Shavit

is a Professor at Tel Aviv University where he teaches the history of Zionism and Jewish intellectual history. He is the author of numerous articles and books, including *The New Hebrew Nation: A Study in Israeli Heresy and Fantasy* (London 1987), *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Movement* (London 1988), *History in Black: Race, History and Culture in African-American Writings* (forthcoming) and *Judaism in the Greek Mirror* (forthcoming).