

The Jews' Oldest Enemies

In 1929, the English anthropologist Gregory Bateson went to Papua New Guinea to conduct fieldwork among the tribes who had lived there for thousands of years absent contact with the outside world. Of particular interest to Bateson was the Iatmul, a group of former head-hunters and cannibals who lived near the Sepik River. Bateson noted that the Iatmul displayed certain ritualistic patterns that tended to intensify, rather than mitigate, conflicts between tribe members. This type of conduct, which Bateson dubbed “schismogenesis,” creates a “vicious cycle” of escalation in which each side responds to the provocations of the other with a still more extreme reaction. Thus can a simple competition between two rival groups easily spiral into a fierce confrontation, if not a violent clash—the end result of which is social disintegration.¹

It goes without saying that destructive cycles of action and counter-action are not unique to primitive tribes. Bateson went on to identify various forms of schismogenesis in a wide range of social interactions, from intimate relationships between individuals to arms races between superpowers. Politics—the scene of many a verbal brawl, as well as unending power struggles—may serve as a prime example. Indeed, Bateson himself mused that it would be interesting “to observe to what extent in their policies politicians are reacting to the reactions of their opponents.”²

Likely as not, an Israeli reading Bateson’s work today would feel that one hardly need go as far as Papua New Guinea to observe the schismogenetic

process at work, as well as its destructive results. For unfortunately, the Jewish state is rife with conflicts of the very sort that Bateson described. The heated controversy over the Boycott Bill, passed into law by the Knesset this past July, is but one example.

In typical schismogenetic fashion, the bill's passage in the Knesset was preceded by a series of altercations, each of which illustrates the deep rifts that characterize Israeli society. In August of last year, for instance, a group of Israeli actors and playwrights declared that they would not take part in productions staged at the new cultural center in Ariel, a city that lies over the Green Line. In a letter sent to the management of various Israeli theaters, and covered extensively by the Israeli press, the actors declared that "we will refuse to perform in Ariel, as well as in any other settlement."³ In another letter, published in November, the boycotters addressed fellow actors who were scheduled to perform in the new theater, pleading with them not to do so: "We call on you to defer to the rulings of your conscience and your public responsibility," they wrote.⁴

Not surprisingly, the protest sparked an uproar. The Yesha Council, which represents Jewish municipalities in the West Bank, announced that it was weighing a counterboycott of the letter's signatories.⁵ Limor Livnat, minister of culture and sport, assailed the "recycled attempt of a handful of people to boycott the people of Ariel," and declared that she would seek to ensure that all cultural institutions receiving government assistance be obligated to perform anywhere in Israeli territory as a condition of their funding.⁶ Yisrael Beitenu, the hawkish political party headed by Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, promised to work toward getting the boycotters' state funding cut. "These artists can enjoy freedom of speech, but not at the expense of the taxpayers' money," asserted Lieberman. "Those who call Israel an apartheid state cannot also profit from it."⁷

Little more than half a year later, a boycott-induced storm swept Israel once again: On June 11 of this year, the Knesset passed the Law for the Prevention of Damage to the State of Israel by Means of a Boycott by a 47 to 38 majority.⁸ The law establishes that "deliberately avoiding economic,

cultural, or academic ties with another person or another factor only because of his ties with the State of Israel, one of its institutions, or an area under its control, in such a way that may cause economic, cultural, or academic damage,” is a civil offense, one that may expose the perpetrator to lawsuits filed by aggrieved parties. Furthermore, the law allows the authorities to deny benefits to any organization or individual that initiates or complies with a boycott.⁹

Ironically, the circumstances behind the law’s formulation were not directly connected to the political debate then taking place in Israel. Initially, the Boycott Bill was introduced as a response to a demand by the Palestinian Authority that Israeli companies participating in the construction of Rawabi, a new city north of Ramallah, refrain from purchasing products manufactured in Jewish “settlements” in East Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the Golan Heights.¹⁰ The whole affair—and related events—understandably struck a nerve: For some time now, much of the Israeli public has felt beset by an international smear campaign spearheaded by the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement, which targets the Jewish state exclusively. From the Boycott Bill’s supporters’ point of view, this piece of legislation was a legitimate and necessary means of self-protection.

Nonetheless, many Israelis sensed that there was something distinctly undemocratic about a law prohibiting boycotts. Indeed, even though the law had been aimed at the radical fringes of the political spectrum, it was severely criticized by the liberal-Zionist mainstream. “We must oppose a government that wants to punish citizens who don’t share its views. This is reminiscent of evil regimes,” declared head of the opposition Tzippi Livni in an interview with Army Radio.¹¹ “This law will serve as a weapon in the hands of those who claim that Israel is not a democracy and does not respect human rights,” asserted Amnon Rubinstein, a former minister of education and recipient of the Israel Prize for law. “It will also increase Israel’s isolation in the academic world and among Western liberal democracies. Paradoxically, this law increases the danger of anti-Israel boycotts. That’s

the polar opposite of what Israel needs at the moment.”¹² Even the speaker of the Knesset, Likud member Reuven Rivlin, joined the critics, maintaining that “not only does the legislation not provide democracy with an effective tool with which to cope with the boycott problem, it also threatens to catapult us into an era in which gagging people becomes standard legal practice, an era in which the democratic-constitutional boundary falls victim to acts of legislative infraction.” He then warned:

In practical terms, the outcome of the legislation will be different from what was intended: Those who have so far not boycotted Israel will do so now, and this time they will not differentiate a Green Line from a Red Line or a Purple Line. In addition, the law weakens our moral right to hold Judea and Samaria, and fans unnecessary ferment and protest domestically, as it brazenly defies the basic freedoms of the sovereign—namely, the citizens of the State of Israel.¹³

The “ferment and protest” about which Rivlin warned were not long in coming. Peace Now, for example, launched a public campaign titled, “Sue me, I boycott products from the settlements.”¹⁴ Another radical group, the Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity movement, announced with militant fervor that the “public violation of the law is a necessary response to anti-democratic legislation; civil disobedience is required in the face of the suppression of the right to free speech and freedom of conscience.... We are ready, and even hope, to be put on trial for violating this non-democratic law.”¹⁵ Some critics of the boycott law went even further: The noted author Yoram Kaniuk announced that “an Israeli civil war has been declared,”¹⁶ and suggested that an independent, enlightened, and secular state be established in Tel Aviv,¹⁷ while filmmaker and Israel Prize laureate Yehuda “Judd” Ne’eman proclaimed in a radio interview that “this should be decided in battle... there should be a civil war between the right and the left, and then we’ll see who wins.”¹⁸

Yet for all their passionate rhetoric about civil rights—and the limits of those rights, an issue all agree is of decisive importance—both sides of the

controversy paid scant attention to the destructive dynamic that ruled the debate, a schismogenesis of reactions that quickly dissolved into an ugly public brawl. Indeed, the lamentable outcome of the disputed law was the unintended legitimization of the boycott among certain members of the public who normally would *not* take such extreme action—that is, were it not disallowed by those whom they oppose. In any case, the seemingly bottomless wellsprings of mutual hate revealed by the furor over the Boycott Bill surprised no one. It is, unfortunately, a well-known Jewish pathology, one that has taken a bloody toll on the nation in the past, and hinders its efforts to establish a healthy and functioning democracy in the present.

It would be fair to say that every human group suffers from a schismogenic malaise of one sort or another. Countless nations have experienced violent domestic spats that in some cases deteriorated into bloody revolutions and civil wars. Even so, it would seem that the Jews are a special case, displaying throughout their history an exceptional tendency toward factionalism. “The Jewish people has been a divided house from the very beginning,” wrote Arthur Hertzberg and Aron Hirt-Manheimer. “When Jews, on occasion, did have the semblance of a united structure, it was short lived.”¹⁹ Indeed, any time the Jews managed to form a large, autonomous commonwealth, they were seized by an almost uncontrollable urge to tear that unity to pieces.

Clearly, the people of Israel suffered from this particular illness since day one: The Hebrew Bible makes no effort to spare its readers stories of fraternal hatred and its murderous outcome. In the wake of the sin of the calf, for example, the members of the tribe of Levi, acting on Moses’ instructions, killed three thousand men who had sinned by worshipping the idol. Jephthah of Gilead massacred forty-two thousand men from the tribe of Ephraim in a single day. The war that the Israelites declared on the tribe of Benjamin following the brutal rape of the concubine in Gibeah cost tens of

thousands of lives, almost destroying the Benjamites completely. And the kingdoms of Israel and Judah continued to clash even after their bitter split; Jehoash, the twelfth king of Israel, even advanced on Jerusalem to despoil the palace and Temple treasuries.

Notably, none of these events, as harrowing as they were, has been carved into the Jewish collective memory as a national disaster. This is undoubtedly because they belong to a relatively early period in the nation's development, a period of moral and spiritual backwardness. The separatism of the Second Temple period, on the other hand, is presented by Jewish sources as a tragedy unlike any other. True, the Jews who returned from exile to their ravaged land were battered and beaten. But they were already in possession of a robust national identity and an impressive cultural tradition. And yet, the people quickly disintegrated into warring factions. As the Talmud recounts, the schismogenetic erosion, which became more and more violent, eventually led to a terrifying climax: "Why was the First Temple destroyed? Because of three [evil] things that prevailed there: idolatry, immorality, bloodshed.... But why was the Second Temple destroyed, seeing that in its time they were occupying themselves with Torah, [observance of] precepts, and the practice of charity? Because therein prevailed hatred without cause. That teaches you that groundless hatred is considered as of equal gravity to the three sins of idolatry, immorality, and bloodshed together."²⁰

The civil war that raged in Jerusalem during the Great Revolt was, without doubt, one of the darkest moments in Jewish history. The Zealots terrorized fellow Jews who failed to take up their cause until the streets of Jerusalem ran red with blood: They killed one another almost indiscriminately. Josephus, who recorded the events from a safe distance, painted a horrifying portrait of a society driven to madness by hatred and despair:

for the seditious themselves, they fought against each other, while they trod upon the dead bodies as they lay heaped one upon another, and taking up a mad rage from those dead bodies that were under their feet,

became the fiercer thereupon. They, moreover, were still inventing somewhat or other that was pernicious against themselves; and when they had resolved upon any thing, they executed it without mercy, and omitted no method of torment or of barbarity.²¹

The horrors of the Great Revolt continue to serve as a warning to generations of Jews, but the lesson has been only partially learned. For the Jews have never forgone their right to despise each other, and at times even to plot one another's demise. The constraints of exile necessarily limited internal quarrels to the spiritual and cultural realm, but what they lacked in physicality they made up for in passion. Rabbinic Judaism denounced the Karaites as heretics; the Mitnagdim scolded the Hasidim; traditionalists lambasted the Maskilim; and many Orthodox Jews still revile the Reform movement.

With the modern return to Zion, the Jewish people rediscovered an arena in which to give vent to its schismogenetic urges in full force: national politics. Indeed, it didn't take long for the Zionist movement to suffer the first crack of internal division. The stormy debate over the "Uganda Program" caused a split with the so-called "Territorialists," led by Israel Zangwill, in 1905. But the worst was yet to come. By far the most severe of the ruptures—and one that haunts Israeli society to this day—was the rift between the Labor movement under the leadership of David Ben-Gurion and the Zionist Revisionist faction headed by Ze'ev Jabotinsky. In the early 1930s, the hostility between the two camps threatened to spark a civil war. Tensions reached a critical point with the assassination of Chaim Arlozoroff, the head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, on June 16, 1933. The accusing finger was pointed at the Revisionists, who had undertaken a campaign of incitement against Arlozoroff on account of his negotiations with the Nazi authorities.²² Even though the men accused of the murder, Zvi Rosenblatt and Avraham Stavsky, were eventually acquitted, the genie was out of the bottle.²³ The Mapai leadership stepped up the campaign against its right-wing rivals, and at the end of that year established the Hapoel troops,

a militia whose purpose, in the words of Ben-Gurion, was to “wage war against Beitar [the Revisionists’ youth movement—A.S.], in which we cannot prevail by preaching morality. Instead we must establish an organized force of our own.”²⁴

And indeed, the Hapoel troops never passed up a chance to exchange blows with the followers of Jabotinsky. On October 17, 1934, more than one thousand members of Hapoel and other Labor-oriented groups attacked a crowd of Revisionists who had gathered in Haifa to listen to a speech by Binyamin Ze’ev (Wolfgang) von Weisl, one of their leaders. Anita Shapira, a prominent Israeli historian, offers a vivid description of this pogrom-like assault:

The disturbances in the hall began immediately when von Weisl started to speak, and the door was breached from the outside. Very quickly, all semblance of control over the rioters was lost, and they began to stone those who were inside the hall. More than twenty people were hurt, including von Weisl himself, as well as two children, one of whom required surgery. The police intervened, but its men were beaten and stoned. When the fracas was finally over, and the wounded were taken from the hall on stretchers, the members of the youth groups that were involved regrouped into lines and marched through the streets of Haifa, chanting, “Forward, Hapoel!”²⁵

The violent clashes were just the tip of the iceberg, however. The Labor movement imposed a widespread boycott on the Revisionists, who consequently had trouble finding work and receiving services in the Yishuv institutions. Some of them were even barred from making *aliya*: In 1937, a young Jewish Pole by the name of Simcha Ploshnitski committed suicide after the aliya division of the Jewish Agency refused to grant him the necessary papers due to his membership in Beitar. In response, Jabotinsky composed an angry poem describing the abuse to which his followers had been subjected by their brethren: “Oh, we shall pay you back, Cain! We shall pay you back!” he vowed.

The schism between the Zionist factions grew deeper as years passed, but thankfully never led to a full-blown bloodbath. That outcome was avoided, in part, thanks to Menachem Begin, commander of the Irgun paramilitary group and the leading figure in Revisionist Zionism after the death of Jabotinsky. Begin's sense of national responsibility—and his patience—withstood numerous trials. During the so-called “hunting season” (or the *Saison*), which lasted from December 1944 through February 1945, Begin's men were pursued by the Hagana, captured, tortured, and extradited to the British authorities. And in perhaps the most famous of the pre-state internecine incidents, on June 22, 1948, Ben-Gurion ordered the newly formed IDF to open fire on the *Altalena* munitions ship—an event that resulted in the deaths of sixteen Irgun fighters and three Israeli soldiers. Despite these provocations, Begin refused to retaliate, insisting that we must “avoid bloody civil war at all cost.”²⁶ “The choice was between a disaster for us alone and a disaster for the whole nation,” he later recounted. “Civil war has a clear beginning, but no clear end.”²⁷

The founding of the state in 1948 halted, or at least subdued, the schismogenetic processes that threatened to push Jewish society in Palestine over the edge. Much of the credit should be attributed to Ben-Gurion, who understood well the wrenching changes the Yishuv would have to undergo in its transition to a sovereign state. Recognizing that the new state's army must enjoy a monopoly on armed force, he ordered the sinking of the *Altalena*, and a few months later the dissolution of the Palmah militia. Ben-Gurion's opponents on both the right and the left blamed his actions on political motivations, yet it is hard to argue with the iron rationale at their core: A country that seeks to erect itself on strong foundations cannot be reconciled to a plethora of armed groups, each of which serves a different political party.

The dissolution of these paramilitary organizations was just one stage in the great historic transformation orchestrated by Israel's first prime minister.

To Ben-Gurion, the task of building the state was an ambitious, almost messianic project of social engineering, whose goal was the creation of a unified and self-confident nation from the forlorn remnants of the old Jewish world. To fulfill that lofty mission, he placed the state at the center of the national identity, making it the ultimate locus of civic responsibility. True, the Labor movement's stronghold on government mechanisms initially cast doubt on the sincerity of any pretensions to lift the state above party politics. As time passed, however, and especially from the early 1960s onward, the republican ideal took decisive root in Israel. The decline of the old Labor establishment gradually turned Ben-Gurion's dream into a reality: As Israel became more democratic, liberal, and pluralistic, large portions of society began to feel that the state belonged to them, and they to it.

And indeed, in the eyes of the vast majority of its citizens, Israel *is* greater, and certainly stronger, than the sum of its parts. The hybrid nature of this collective entity, with its impossible synthesis of statehood, nationality, society, and family, imbues Israeli "tribalism" with undeniable vibrancy. A diverse population, composed of secular and traditional Jews from both the right and the left, the national-religious public, the Druze minority, as well as non-Jewish immigrants and their offspring, all consider Israel its home, and identifies deeply with it.²⁸ And as Israel's short history has shown, despite the differences and not-insignificant gaps between these groups, they come together consistently in times of crisis. The Second Lebanon War, for example, occasioned a particularly impressive display of solidarity: Residents of the north, their homes bombarded by Hezbollah rockets, found temporary shelter with families living in the center of the country, many of whom they had never met.

That solidarity, which only grows in the face of external threats, has undoubtedly afforded Israeli society some measure of protection against schismogenetic urges. But unity is always tenuous. Even if the possibility of a civil war seems wholly unrealistic, brutal attacks by individuals or small groups on public figures or political rivals—such as the murder of Peace Now activist Emil Grunzweig on February 10, 1983 and the assassination

of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on November 4, 1995—indicate that groundswells of repressed violence remain beneath the fragile surface of Israeli democracy.

It is to be expected, then, that outbursts of animosity sometimes boil over into unchecked incitement. A number of recent incidents illustrate just how severe the problem has become. In response to the forced eviction of two Jewish families from apartments in Hebron's market, Hillel Weiss, a professor of literature at Bar-Ilan University, addressed the local commander of the Israeli army in a news interview, and wished "that his mother lose her child; his wife become a widow; his children orphans; and that he should die in the next war."²⁹ Gabi Gazit, a popular radio personality, vilified the Haredim, calling them "leeches," "parasites," and "worms," and declaring that "they should be confined to their neighborhoods" and have their water and electricity shut off. Alternatively, he mused, they should be driven away from the state.³⁰ Eyal Nir, an activist and chemistry professor at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, labeled right-wing activists "a group of bandits infesting our country," and used his Facebook page to urge "the world to come and help break these scoundrels' necks."³¹ Ze'ev Sternhell, a renowned historian, wrote in a column published a number of years ago in *Haaretz* that if the Palestinians "had a little sense" they would "refrain from planting bombs west of the Green Line" and "concentrate their struggle against the settlements" instead.³² Some readers felt he was legitimizing terrorist attacks on Jewish settlers. One of them, Yaakov Teitel, placed a pipe bomb at Sternhell's door in September 2008, wounding him. Teitel, a self-styled terrorist who has carried out a number of murderous attacks against both Palestinians and Jews, said after his arrest that he intended only to hurt the controversial academic figure, not to kill him. "He called for the death of the settlers and won the Israel Prize and therefore is an attractive target," explained Teitel. "He's left-wing and he teaches people his 'religion.'"³³

The poisonous atmosphere surrounding Israeli public discourse can easily drive one to despair. The slurs and the acrimonious threats often drown out the more sane voices of those who wish to preserve the common

denominator on which Israeli democracy rests. Many feel that internal discord has reached alarming proportions, and threatens the very survival of the Jewish state. Fania Oz-Salzberger, a scholar of political thought, contends that it is already too late to heal the rift. The column she wrote after the passing of the Boycott Bill can be read as a eulogy for the Zionist project:

The process was long, but the moment of awareness has been short and cruel and is taking place right now. The tribes of Israel are more divided than at any time in the biblical or modern age. The collective has become the separate. There is no one nation in any sense, either national or civic. From a loose but durable federation of aspirations and points of view, the nation has become an arena for clashes, cursing, and imposing one's will. It's terrible that this has happened.³⁴

Despite everything, we should not hasten to eulogize the Jewish state. In the six decades that have passed since its establishment, Israel has managed, against all odds, to bring an extremely diverse population together. And yet, the incessant internal tensions between various groups and sectors—Jews and Arabs, right and left, religious and secular, Ashkenazim and Sephardim—have taken a heavy toll. Israel prides itself on having established a democratic regime that functions in a perpetual state of emergency. But it has not developed the conditions required for the long term prosperity of a republic, beginning with a culture of healthy public debate.

As is well known, the liberal-democratic order is based on the notion that the public sphere is *meant* to serve as a meeting place for those who hold different views, allowing them to exchange information and ideas. Moreover, in an enlightened liberal democracy, people who disagree are supposed to engage in negotiation and persuasion in order to gain support for their positions. Continuous deliberations shape every aspect of this commonwealth. They form the basis of relations between fellow citizens, between their representatives in government, and between voters and their elected officials. Representative democracy, from this perspective, is “government

by discussion.”³⁵ As the English philosopher John Stuart Mill contended, it is the distinct advantage of the parliamentary system that it allows for a vigorous debate in which people of *all* opinions can take part:

Representative assemblies are often taunted by their enemies with being places of mere talk and *bavardage*. There has seldom been more misplaced derision. I know not how a representative assembly can more usefully employ itself than in talk, when the subject of talk is the great public interests of the country, and every sentence of it represents the opinion either of some important body of persons in the nation, or of an individual in whom some such body of persons have reposed their confidence. A place where every interest and shade of opinion in the country can have its cause even passionately pleaded, in the face of the government and of all other interests and opinions, can compel them to listen, and either comply, or state clearly why they do not, is in itself, if it answered no other purpose, one of the most important political institutions that can exist anywhere, and one of the most foremost benefits of free government.³⁶

Sadly, the twentieth century saw the rise of a blatantly anti-liberal approach that opposed this deliberative model of public life, and presented political culture in a completely different light: not as a stage for discussion, but as a battlefield, on which a fight to the death is played out. The main representative of this view, the controversial German jurist Carl Schmitt, understood politics as a conflict between rival groups that divide the world into “friends” and “enemies,” and which seek only the defeat of the latter—by means of violence, if necessary. “The political is the most intense and extreme antagonism, and every concrete antagonism becomes much more political the closer it approaches the most extreme point, that of the friend-enemy grouping,” Schmitt declared.³⁷ For those still unsure of what exactly hangs in the balance in the political struggle, Schmitt clarified that “the friend, enemy, and combat concepts receive their real meaning precisely because they refer to the real possibility of physical killing.”³⁸

Each of the approaches mentioned above offers only a partial account of a democratic commonwealth. The classic liberal view emphasizes the undeniable importance of deliberation, but tends to paint an idealized picture of a society made up of rational agents, all of whom are willing to listen to one another. So, too, does the Schmittian view touch on an important point—that of the animosity that often characterizes public debate—but draws a terrifying portrait of a polarized society that stands perpetually on the brink of civil war or violent revolution. In a sense, these descriptions represent two possibilities: the first utopian, and the second catastrophic. Ultimately, we can judge the likelihood of a democracy’s survival by its proximity to one or the other pole.

Which approach does a boycott serve? The answer is almost self-evident. Someone who takes this sort of action is not interested in dialogue or persuasion, whether because he despairs of its effectiveness, or because he had no interest in conversing with the opposing side from the outset. True, the boycott of one group or another can wrap itself in the mantle of free speech, and even obtain the legal protection of the courts. In reality, however, it is an act of public violence. Although it does not involve actual bloodshed, a boycott is inherently a termination attempt carried out by political, social, economic, or cultural means. (Note, in this context, that the Hebrew word for boycott, *herem*, is used in the Bible to denote, among other things, the divinely sanctioned annihilation of the Canaanite nations.)³⁹ The imposition of a boycott undermines the very foundations of liberal democracy. It betrays a lack of trust in deliberation as a means of bridging disagreements. Instead, it takes the path of hostile and vengeful confrontation.

Unfortunately, the Knesset’s Boycott Bill does little to help the democratic cause. It does not encourage discussion or mediation, but rather harnesses the authority of the law to enforce unity and exclude dissension. Though the factionalism displayed by Israel’s legislative body does indeed reflect the rifts within the general public, it is hard to shake the feeling that the country’s representatives aren’t making enough of an effort to set an example for their constituents, preferring instead to embrace and even

enhance the aggression of Israeli society. At times, the Knesset's conduct sadly affirms Schmitt's contention that the official rules of the parliamentary game have become nothing more than "a superfluous decoration, useless and even embarrassing, as though someone had painted the radiator of a modern central heating system with red flames in order to give the appearance of a blazing fire."⁴⁰

The long and sorry history of the Jewish nation is undeniable proof of its extraordinary psychological resilience and its willingness to transcend internal divisions in times of danger. One can certainly take comfort in the knowledge that, when under pressure, the Jews have proven their capacity to act as a unified force to be reckoned with. But a society cannot reach its full potential solely on the basis of its willingness to rise to the occasion. On the contrary, it must develop the tools that will enable it to deal with the more mundane tasks of maintaining a sovereign and democratic state. A culture of public schismogenesis will complicate, if not confound, efforts to do so, and in the long run will erode a society's ability to survive existential crises. Even at this very moment, as we enjoy the relative security and strength of the state we have established in the land of our fathers, we Jews must review and remember that heartbreaking dirge written by Josephus, witness to the greatest disaster that our nation ever brought upon itself:

O most wretched city, what misery so great as this didst thou suffer from the Romans, when they came to purify thee from thy intestine hatred! For thou couldst be no longer a place fit for God, nor couldst thou long continue in being, after thou hadst been a sepulcher for the bodies of thy own people, and hadst made the holy house itself a burying-place in this civil war of thine. Yet mayst thou again grow better, if perchance thou wilt hereafter appease the anger of that God who is the author of thy destruction.⁴¹

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Notes

1. Bateson differentiates between “symmetrical schismogenesis,” which occurs between individuals or groups that respond in a similar manner to one another, and “complementary schismogenesis” in which the reactions of each are of a different, and usually opposite, kind (for example, aggressiveness that elicits submission and humility). See Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1972), p. 68.

2. Gregory Bateson, *Naven: A Survey of the Problems Suggested by a Composite Picture of the Culture of a New Guinea Tribe Drawn from Three Points of View* (Stanford: Stanford, 1958), p. 186.

3. Meirav Yudelovitch, “Artists to Refuse to Perform in Ariel Culture Hall,” YnetNews, August 27, 2010.

4. Roni Sofer, “MKs: Stop Funding ‘Lunatic’ Artists,” YnetNews, November 6, 2010.

5. Ronen Medzini, “Ministers Slam Artists over Ariel Boycott,” YnetNews, August 29, 2010.

6. “Culture Minister to Meet Ariel Arts Center Boycott Organizers,” *Haaretz*, October 15, 2010; “New Prize to Encourage ‘Zionist Art,’” YnetNews, September 11, 2010.

7. Jonathan Lis, “Yisrael Beitenu: Israel Must Not Fund Artists Who Boycott Settlement Arts Center,” *Haaretz*, November 7, 2010.

8. Moran Azulay, “Knesset Votes in Favor of ‘Boycott Bill,’” YnetNews, July 11, 2011.

9. For the full text of the Boycott Bill, see: www.acri.org.il/en/?p=2600.

10. Tovah Lazaroff, “Israelis Building Rawabi Must Boycott Settlement Goods,” *Jerusalem Post*, December 28, 2010.

11. Zvi Harel, Gideon Allon, Mati Tuchfeld, Efrat Forsher, and Maya Cohen, “Boycott Law Poses Constitutional Challenges, But Can Be Defended Before High Court,” *Israel Hayom*, July 13, 2011.

12. Karl Vick, “Amid Uproar, Israeli Lawmakers Vote to Punish Boycotters,” *Time*, July 12, 2011.

13. Reuven Rivlin, “The Parliamentary Fists of the Majority,” *Haaretz*, July 15, 2011.

14. See www.peacenow.org.il/boycott [Hebrew].

15. Jonathan Lis and Tomer Zarchin, "Following the Law's Approval: A Petition to the High Court and a Call to Boycott Products from the Settlements," *Haaretz*, July 12, 2011 [Hebrew].

16. Yoram Kaniuk, "The Israeli Civil War Has Already Been Declared," *Walla!*, July 12, 2011 [Hebrew].

17. Yoram Kaniuk, "Establish the State of Tel Aviv—Now," *Walla!*, July 17, 2011 [Hebrew].

18. The full interview can be heard at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDUgG6MB_5M&feature=related [Hebrew].

19. Arthur Hertzberg and Aron Hirt-Manheimer, *Jews: The Essence and Character of a People* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), p. 35.

20. Yoma 9b.

21. Josephus Flavius, *The War of the Jews; or the History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, trans. William Whiston, www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=1989121&pageno=1.

22. On June 16, the day of the murder, the radical Revisionist weekly *Hazit Ha'am* (The People's Front), published an especially aggressive article written by Yochanan Pogrebinski. "The Jewish public in the Land of Israel and in the Diaspora will greet the tripartite alliance Stalin–Ben-Gurion–Hitler with revulsion and disgust," he warned, "and there will be no forgiveness for those who, for the love of money, sold the dignity of their people to the craziest of antisemites for the whole enlightened world to see. The Jews, who have always known how to handle those who sold their honor and their Torah, will also know now how to respond to this abomination." Quoted in Anita Shapira, *Visions in Conflict* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1989), pp. 96-97 [Hebrew].

23. Zvi Rosenblatt was acquitted in Jerusalem on June 8, 1934. Stavsky was found guilty on the basis of the testimony of Sima Arlozoroff, the wife of the victim, but was acquitted by the Court of Criminal Appeal on July 20. Aba Ahimeir, a Revisionist intellectual and journalist, spent a year and a half in prison for being the founder of and driving force behind the radical Brit Habirionim organization, of which both Stavsky and Rosenblatt were members.

24. Menachem Sarid, *Chosen to Govern: The Struggle for the Hegemony of the Yishuv and Zionism, 1930-1935* (Herzliya: Oren, 2004), p. 343 [Hebrew].

25. Shapira, *Visions in Conflict*, p. 111.

26. Menachem Begin, *The Revolt* (New York: Dell, 1978), p. 213.

27. Menachem Begin, *The Revolt* (Tel Aviv: Ahiasaf, 1974), p. 210 [Hebrew].

28. A somewhat reserved feeling of belonging also characterizes parts of the Haredi and Arab populations, both of which reject Zionist ideology. Nonetheless, neither of the two groups sees itself as a part of the Israeli “tribe.”

29. Can be heard at www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oZos04g75o [Hebrew].

30. Can be heard at www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJZ9eQF6Cac [Hebrew].

31. Ilana Curiel, “Lecturer: Break Rightists’ Necks,” *YnetNews*, June 11, 2011.

32. Ze’ev Sternhell, “Confronting a Demented Government,” *Haaretz*, May 11, 2001 [Hebrew].

33. Roi Sharon, “Jack Teitel’s Ventures in the Dungeons of Shabak,” *NRG*, January 2, 2010 [Hebrew].

34. Fania Oz-Salzberger, “The Collective Has Come Apart,” *Haaretz*, July 22, 2011.

35. See Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics* (New York: Knopf, 1869), ch. 5.

36. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford, 1991), p. 283.

37. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996), p. 29.

38. Schmitt, *Concept of the Political*, p. 33.

39. See Deuteronomy 20:17-18: “But you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite as the Lord your God has commanded you; that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods, so that you would sin against the Lord your God.”

40. Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, trans. Ellen Kennedy (Cambridge: MIT, 1985), p. 6.

41. Josephus, *War of the Jews*, p. 221.