

contempt for the intellectual, service oriented, urban, pacifistic, traditional Jew.

In the forties and into the fifties we had a whole slew of ideals. We spoke the language that these same hills and valleys had echoed thousands of years earlier. The language is known as *Hebrew*, and we named ourselves after it. Our community was the *Hebrew Settlement*. Our institutions all bore this designation: my high school was the Hebrew Gymnasium, my alma mater the Hebrew University. Other institutions, such as the technical institute in Haifa have since shed the title "Hebrew". In still other cases people now remember "Jewish" where "Hebrew" had been used. By any foreign dictionary the two are synonymous. But to us, in the forties, they spelled all the difference in the world. We were the only Hebrew community in existence, to the exclusion of all Jewish groups.

We read the remaining original Hebrew document of antiquity, the old testament, with a secular sense of presence that no foreign Jew or Christian could understand. And out of it all grew a commitment to forge ourselves to the needs of our country; to adopt livelihoods, population patterns, and attitudes alien to our foreign born Jewish parents. We were going to settle and farm vast areas, reforest others, spread out, dominate the landscape in a beneficial and sound way.

All of these ideals are long abandoned, and largely forgotten. The Jewish community of Israel is openly just that - a Jewish community, with the patterns of livelihood, employment, and domicile typical of any Jewish community. Top heavy with brainpower and academic training; lacking in labor and industry; weak in agriculture; an urban community concentrated in the coastal plain. The landscape is blotted with ugly apartment buildings towering above each other and shrouded in smog.

One might expect some replacement positive ideals from the traditional Jewish book. But this is not the case. The motives of current day Israel are all negative. Israelis believe that anti-semitism is universal and unavoidable; that nazi movements will soon hold power in Europe and in America. The function of Israel is to serve as asylum for the Jews being persecuted or about to be. For that purpose it is permissible to proclaim Israel as the "land of the Jews" (who are not there) and deny it to local "Palestinians" (who are). It bears no weight that the remote ancestors of these Palestinians were Jewish. A suggestion that this community be allowed to integrate in Israel draws negative reactions: "national suicide".

Discussions of Israeli - American relations brings up the question: "Is Bush an anti-semite? Is Baker?" Many in Israel believe that one or the other is, or that both are. Few seek to understand American attitudes and positions beyond this determination.

To my hosts I am one of those "blind" Jews who cannot see the writing on the wall. Leaving the safety of Israel, I'll fall prey to Skinheads and other varieties of Nazis. My ungrateful attitude makes no difference. When things get too hot here, they'll let me in...