

From the J-Vault: An American Zionist Vision from 1948

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This week from the J-Vault: *Implications of the New Developments in Palestine for Jewish Culture* (September 1948)

Today Israelis, Jews, and Zionists all over the world (both Jewish and non-Jewish) celebrate *Yom Haatzmaut*, Israel's Independence Day, and this week's J-Vault selection was published in the **Journal of Jewish Communal Service** in September 1948 during a cease-fire between the second and third phases of **Israel's War of Independence**. In the midst of that uneasy lull in battle, which would yield to open war again one month later, Alexander M. Dushkin focused not on the immediate military, diplomatic or humanitarian situation of the newly declared State, but on the place of that new State in the wider scheme of Jewish history and culture, as well as in Diaspora life -- particularly in America.

"My thesis," wrote Dushkin, "is that the reconstituted Jewish Homeland—both in the State of Israel and in international Jerusalem— will have a three-fold effect on Jewish cultural development in America. It should help us (a) clarify the character of our culture; (b) change our attitude toward it and (c) enhance our own cultural creativity." The result, he predicted, would be that world Jewry will assume a new overall shape. "Our Jewish world of today and tomorrow is like a great ellipse with two foci—one focus is in ourselves, in American life and effort; the other is in the Hebraic cultural center in the new Palestine. Culturally, they are both necessary to each other, and their spiritual symbiosis is our grand task in the days ahead."

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