

U.N. Security Council, after all, which laid the groundwork for negotiations between Israel and the Arabs, and which is policing the truce between Israel and her neighbors. And without the General Assembly, there would be little opportunity for Israeli diplomats even to meet their opposite numbers in other parts of the world. It is important also to remember that the United States and Europe have not always been in the right when they stood on opposite sides of issues from the smaller countries. Some check on the will of the great powers is still desirable.

As for the need to continue the search for a peaceful settlement – who after all these wars could deny it? Not the true political Zionist, who desires a Jewish state that Jews might live in safety. Not the true cultural Zionist, who desires that Israel have the breathing space truly to become a center of Jewish art and music. Not the true religious Zionist, who knows how much the exigencies of a state of siege interfere with the creation of an halachic, messianic state in holy space. And certainly not the true Diaspora Zionist, who has only now been able to say that he or she is a Zionist too, aware that only when the Diaspora and *Eretz Yisrael* together are upbuilt can the hopes of political, cultural, and religious Zionism really be fulfilled.

Racism, the unavoidable national sin

Henry Schwarzschild

The November 10 United Nations resolution terming Zionism a species of racism came with stunning ill grace, considering its source. Have so many pots ever called so few kettles black? For Rabbi Richard Levy, as for most of those who were heard reacting with proper outrage at the resolution, there is no discussion of the merits, no debate on substance, no refutation of the charge. There is merely a cry of solidarity with Israel and an outpouring of historical analogies with the 1930's. Now there is also an effort to snatch a "benefit" from the jaws of an "awful event."

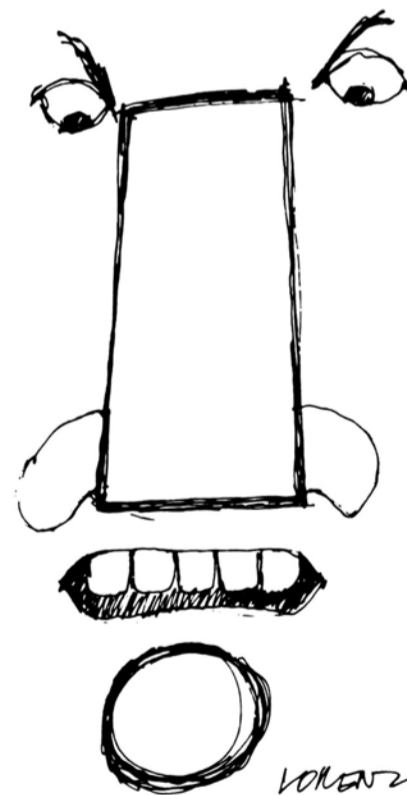
The benefit that Rabbi Levy sees flowing from the U.N. vote is the slogan proclaimed by the American Zionist establishment that "every Jew is now a Zionist." The coincidence with the anniversary of the *Kristallnacht* evidently suggested the problematic parallel with Robert Weltsch's enjoinder to German Jewry "*Tragt ihn mit Stolz, den gelben Fleck!*" ("Wear the Yellow Star with pride!") But the slogan claims too much, and Rabbi Levy seems to know it, for he demands so little from it. If Zionism were

merely the affirmation of the worth and necessity of the Jewish state and the Jewish people, there would have been little reason to argue for almost thirty years about the meaning of the term. By diluting the ideological strength of the word, he hopes to make it palatable to one and all.

Zionism is essentially political nationalism

The essence of Zionism, in the history of modern Jewish political thought, has been: The Jewish State as The Solution to The Jewish Question. It has meant that Jews, dispersed, oppressed, insecure, dependent upon their host governments, would find physical security in their own nation-state. All other considerations, normalization of Jewish economics and psychics, re-establishment of *ur-halakhic* norms, revitalization of the Hebrew language and of Jewish culture, experimentation with new social arrangements, were superstructural.

The debate over the rights of the indigenous Arab population in the Holy Land, a debate as old as modern Zionism itself, has been carried on with varying degrees of concern and realism. Rabbi Levy is not far from the normative tone of that debate in defining the terms of the Jewish nation state as (a) consisting of a Jewish majority, (b) that majority creating a



*I'm not mad at anybody.
I'm a U. N. Ambassador*

nation-state “in whatever image we choose,” and (c) excluding the rights and national needs of minority populations. Add to this the halakhic definition of the Jewish people by matrilineal descent (with exceptions that are statistically and politically insignificant), the conceptual assumption (“a land and a society where the principles of Jewish law and values will govern”), and the constitutional implementation (e.g. the Law of Return), and one would suppose that the charge of racism is at least worthy of rebuttal rather than dismissal.

Racism is inherent to ethnic nation-states

Ethnic nationalism, far from being the outdated 19th century notion that liberals and radicals of the century between 1850 and 1950 thought it was, remains the most potent force in the earth’s political arrangements. The ethnic nation-state is by its nature exclusionary vis-a-vis other ethnicities. (The United States, as a state, was created *ex nihilo* rather than on the basis of a pre-existent nation, but even this did not preserve us from anti-American Indian, anti-Oriental and anti-African racisms. Many of the new post-colonial states are multi-tribal rather than ethnic; that hasn’t helped either, witness Uganda.) The insistence by ethnic nations upon being in the majority in their state, upon creating the state in whatever image they choose, and upon letting ethnic-national values predominate in it, is the functional equivalent of racism. The 1960’s taught us that we are all children of the 19th and 20th centuries: *Nous sommes tous des racistes* (We are all racists). It merely remains for us to acknowledge and deal with this part of our natural inheritance. If racism is a sin, it may not be one that an ethnic nation-state or its ideology can avoid, since it is built into its very definition and nature. Ethnic nation-states, indeed, are prone to many other sins as well. Perhaps it is necessary to make some hard choices.

The noblest liberal illusion is that all self-interests harmonize. But the “actualization of one people’s messianic potential” (presumably “in whatever image it chooses”) may cause sharp conflict with other peoples actualizing theirs. Indeed, the very phrase conjures up *jihad*, Crusades, *mission civilisatrice*, white man’s burden, *Lebensraum*, and The American Century, none of them a paradigm of messianic peace.

We must support israel, but we are not all zionists

The General Assembly action, hypocritical and craven as it was, found more nations abstaining or voting in the minority than have in recent times evinced any support for Israel. Much more commonly, the United

States has been Israel’s sole friend, and one of increasingly doubtful reliability at that. For Israel, a country of 3½ million, surrounded by a hostility that it has done too little to diminish, the survival of its people must be a higher priority than the actualization of its messianic potential. The Jewish national need for survival may perhaps be frustrated by more than Rabbi Levy’s peculiarly disingenuous triad of terrorism, threat of war, and the U.N. resolution. What if the Jewish nation-state frustrates that need for Jewish survival because it impedes the actualization of the Arabs’ messianic potential? That *would* be sauce for the gander!

The particularist eschatologist in Rabbi Levy has the Messiah arise in a Jewish land; the universalist eschatologist in him expects the Messiah from a Judaized diaspora. At the present historical reading, messianic hopes had perhaps best concentrate on his/her arrival upon God’s utter desperation at the failure to Judaize either Israel or the diaspora.

The safety of the *yishuv* is of the most central and intense concern to every Jew who was able to say “*shehecheyanu*” in 1948. But nowhere (as we are ceaselessly told by Israel and its messengers) are Jews in greater danger of genocidal extinction than in Israel. The Jewish state, conceived as the *solution* to the Jewish problem, has become *the* Jewish problem. That melancholy irony proclaims the absolute end of Zionism.

In defining all Jews as Zionists, Rabbi Levy makes a dubious virtue out of a non-existent necessity. It is not necessary (nor possible) for us to be Zionists. It is impossible for us not to be *hoveve zion* (those who cherish Zion). It is only terribly hard for us to be Jews *baz’man hazeh* (in our time).

Zionism must allow for open dissent

Jeffrey K. Salkin

The Jewish psyche is raw and bruised. The “Zionism is racism” resolution is the cruelest blow to the Jewish community as yet. In one swift action, it gives implicit credence to the events of the preceding autumns – Munich, the *Yom Kippur* War, Arafat. It acts as a polarizing device – to be against Zionism (and does one read: Israel, Jews?) is to be opposed to racism, hence, the holiness of *jihad*. Like the General Brown statement regarding alleged Jewish control in this country, it is by no means easy to answer.

And yet, to be fair, we Jews are often ourselves guilty