

Language in Time of Revolution

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poet must have *heard* the words in his inner ear as the poem was written.⁵⁹ And so did his readers.

In view of all this, we may ask: What was lacking to turn Hebrew into a living language? The major absences were:

- i. the automatic habit of articulation and speaking aloud, that native speakers have;
- ii. The automatic and fluent formulation of sentences without prior reflection;
- iii. The composition of new sentences and responses in a living dialogue situation;
- iv. the exchange of the personal base language for a new base language (an extremely difficult feat); that is, that a person speaking Hebrew would not translate it from, or base it on, another language.
- v. the creation of a social base language with one, unified, basic vocabulary to be used by all speakers, rather than the library of heterogeneous texts with undecided variants;
- vi. the inclusion of all areas of life and knowledge, not just those that have been expanded in the literature; so as to rely neither on another Jewish frame language nor on the language of the State for such wider areas covered by them.

All the above-described phenomena developed in the evolution of Hebrew literature in its written form; an arsenal of tools was prepared. And now a revolutionary situation emerged. In this atmosphere, the extremely rapid spread of Hebrew speech among those who had known the written language before indicates that speaking Hebrew was possible even without having to give up the wealth of the language, without starting from scratch; it could be entered directly from a high cultural level—and perhaps only thus.

59. Bialik himself wrote a series of quasi-folk songs, using the motifs of Yiddish folk songs but harnessing them to Russian meters. He wrote about it: "I am now enamored of the genre of folk poetry. The Hebrew language never tried it and there is in it a special flavor: folk songs in a language that is not spoken [in 1910! That is what the greatest Hebrew poet thought of the "revival" of spoken Hebrew—B.H.]; it is only regrettable that our reading [in the Ashkenazi accent] is distorted, which brings about a poetic meter strange to the ears of the reader and grammarian. This fault will prevent the poems from spreading in Eretz-Israel and becoming full-fledged folk songs, sung aloud [that is what he thought of their intellectual level]" (Bialik 1990:447).

New Cells of Society in a Social Desert

The third, and decisive, factor that contributed to the revival of the Hebrew language as a base language of society was *the creation of new social cells* in a new land perceived by the immigrants as a "social wasteland." The experiment could be successfully conducted only in a small, controlled laboratory, not in the traditional territory of the millions who spoke another language or the hundreds of thousands who integrated in the language of the State. From the Second Aliya (1904–1914) on, almost every new entity created in Eretz-Israel and formulating itself as new and cut off from the past, tried to impose the Hebrew language in its framework. The revolution took place in three complementary ways: from above, from around, and from within. From above, the schools imposed the language on their students, at least while they were at school. From around, frameworks of life in the city, especially in the "First Hebrew City," Tel Aviv, began to be carried out in Hebrew. From within, groups of laborers created cells of Hebrew speakers. Combining those influences, high-school students also created cells of Hebrew speakers and many families internalized the frame language of the city and the language of their children.

The ideological core of the Second Aliya were the idealist workers. Those were young intellectuals whose imagination was caught by the new secular trends in Diaspora; they never before did any physical work, nor did their "grandmothers" (as the Yiddish saying goes), and they never had any attachment to the soil. The turn to physical work on the land was an ideological decision of self-realization in an effort toward the productivization of the Jews, reclaiming the ancestral homeland, and reclaiming their own character. It was an attempt to create a Jewish proletarian class, as a "normal" nation should have, which would then provide the base for a socialist society.

It was also a movement of conscious, almost proud despair, fed by the failure of the Russian Revolution of 1905, the pogroms of 1903–1905, the helplessness of the self-defense (in which many of them participated) vis-à-vis the tsarist police,

and the disintegration of any relevant Jewish response. Many young people left Russia for Western universities or for Berlin, London, and the United States. Among the young Zionists, there was a perception that "everything" was lost, and they embraced Brenner's slogan: "In spite of everything!" (*af-al-pi-kheh*). The labor leader and ideologue Berl Katznelson summarized the situation in retrospect:

And at a time when any widespread hope in Zionism was lost, dissipated, when all the Jewish youth began to retreat from this camp, when all the elements of the idea of Organic Zionism—love for the Land, revival of the language, working the soil—began to disappear, at that very moment, by some miracle, a small residue was found in the camp, small and weak, and it too standing on the edge of an abyss; and this handful found in their own souls a strange courage—not belief and hope but courage emanating from the thought that perhaps we are the last ones, and, if history issued a verdict that we have no future or any revival, let us be the last ones, but we shall not leave the battlefield. The torch ignited on the banks of the Thames by Yosef-Hayim Brenner⁶⁰—ostensibly the bearer of national heresy—with his call: "We shall be the last ones on the ramparts!"—achieved its mission. Disgust arose—disgust with the desolation in Eretz-Israel, disgust with the weakness of will in the Zionist movement. A revolt arose—not against the oppressing governments. Not against the despotism of the House of Romanov [the Russian Tsar], even not against the social order in general, but against the very movement in which this generation was born, against the Zionist movement, the Jewish intelligentsia, Hebrew literature—a comprehensive, immense revolt in all domains of life. [. . .]

In this situation of terrible isolation within Judaism—that Judaism which, after [the pogroms of] Kishinev and Homel and [the failed Revolution of] 1905, with all the increase of national pain, was totally helpless or saw its way only in abandoning the Zionist dream; isolation among our comrades in party and ideology; and isolation and estrangement within the *Yishuv* in Eretz-Israel—in this situation, the Second Aliya had to continue its work, not always out of faith and satisfaction but often out of ultimate despair; not because we recognized the beauty in faith but because we sensed the ugliness in betrayal, weakness, and impotence; out of an internal imperative to overcome and not abandon the struggle. (B. Katznelson 1947a:12)

In the year of pogroms, summer 1905—summer 1906, about two hundred thousand Jews emigrated from Russia and only thirty-five hundred came to Palestine (Ben-Sasson 1976:861), many of whom left after a short while. Berl Katznelson was aware of the irrationality of this move.

It was rational to be against Eretz-Israel (to go to Eretz-Israel meant to go to the country of Abd El-Hamid [the Turkish Sultan]. We, who are fighting here [in Russia] against the power of a monarchy, are going to a country ruled by Abd El-

60. The Hebrew writer Yosef-Hayim Brenner was at the time in London, where he published a little magazine *Ha-Meorer* ("Reveille" or "The Waking Call")—an allusion to an earlier Russian immigrant, Alexandr Herzen, who published in London a Russian revolutionary journal, *Kolobol* ("The Tocsin"). Out of total despair about the future of a Jewish nation, *Ha-Meorer* launched the beginnings of Modernism in Hebrew literature.

Hamid?... The same holds for Hebrew: it was rational to say that the masses don't need Hebrew, have no opportunity to know and study Hebrew. But I did not yet want to close that account. (B. Katznelson 1947b:76)

The workers tried to get work (the so-called "conquest of Hebrew Work") with private Jewish farmers in the settlements of the First Aliya, but that was not always successful because of competition from cheaper Arab labor and the fear those Jewish peasants had of the over-intellectualized socialist newcomers (who might even influence their own daughters). The farmers seemed to the young socialists to be exploiters, "*Boazim*" (from *Boaz*, the Biblical rich farmer). The workers could not survive individually and organized themselves into two parties: *The Party of Hebrew Social-Democratic Workers in Eretz-Israel Poalei-Tsiyon* ("Workers of Zion"), deriving from the Marxist Zionist Labor party *Poalei Tsiyon* that emerged in Europe and America; and the new, non-Marxist party, *Ha-Poel Ha-Tsayir* ("the Young Worker"). Though both were Socialist Zionist and both demanded not just ideology but personal self-realization, there was an ongoing dispute between them almost imperative for ideological expression in a Jewish society. *Poalei Tsiyon* was the more ideological party, whereas *Ha-Poel Ha-Tsayir* was in favor of an "evolutionary revolution" (Shapiro 1967:15) and emphasized the principle of self-realization of the individual who redeems his own freedom through his "sweat and bleeding heart." In its programmatic statement against *Poalei Tsiyon*, it declared that Social-Democracy "hangs in the air, without any base in this country lacking industrial development," hence "damaging to the realization of Zionism"; but it admitted that, because of "the highly developed predilection of some of our young generation toward abstract thought," that party too may exist here.

The numbers were extremely small: in 1906, there were 90 members of *Ha-Poel Ha-Tsayir* and 60 in *Poalei Tsiyon*. Even in 1912, at the height of the Second Aliya immigration, and after a six-year struggle for the "conquest of work," there were altogether 522 workers in Judea and 240 in the distant Galilee. It is estimated that no more than three thousand workers immigrated to the country during the period 1904–1914 (i.e., about 10% of the growth of the *Yishuv*) (M. Eliav 1978: 335). The conditions were difficult, the utopian future remote, many suffered physically or mentally, many despaired, and most of the newcomers left the country (according to one of them, David Ben-Gurion, about 90% of the Second Aliya eventually left [1947:17]); but they were the founders of much that was creative in the *Yishuv*, including the agricultural collective settlements, the labor movement, and the Hebrew-speaking culture. As Berl Katznelson put it: "The Second Aliya [. . .] came under a special star; it was the tragic mode that accompanied it, which crystallized it and made it into a force in the nation" (B. Katznelson 1947a:11; my emphasis—B.H.).

The slogan of *Ha-Poel Ha-Tsayir* was: "Our world stands on three things: on Hebrew land, on Hebrew work, and on the Hebrew language" (emphasis mine—B.H.). Clearly, the word "Hebrew" was a label for the whole revolutionary

package, as opposed to the nature of the Diaspora "Jew." Thus, on October 1, 1906, the ideologue and optimist David Ben-Gurion (a member of the other party) wrote from the settlement Petah Tikva to his father in Poland (to whom he had to prove that his decision to leave home made sense):

The Hebrew Renaissance, here it is! Hebrew signs on every store, Hebrew speech in the streets, stores, and restaurants, the buds of revival! No. Here you cannot doubt. You cannot disbelieve! . . . Here is a Hebrew boy riding with assurance on a galloping donkey, a Hebrew girl, eight years old, rides on a donkey loaded with freight—These are the visions of revival! (Ben-Gurion 1972:75)

"Hebrew" here is not just a language but an omnibus positive label for a new kind of Jewish existence. The image of the cavalry of a galloping donkey may signal daring, a return to nature, or the uninhibited behavior of a free child, but not quite a sign of the revival of the language.

The laborers lived in poverty and alienation, the physical mastery of work was a Herculean task. They had no property, no land, no houses. They were not welcome by the Turkish authorities, the Arabs, the Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem, or the Jewish farmers of the First Aliya. Their existence in Eretz-Israel was justified only by the total ideological commitment that filled the entire lives of those stubborn youngsters. The commitment was built on a series of binary oppositions: freedom versus exile, Eretz-Israel versus Diaspora, Hebrew versus Yiddish, Sephardi versus Ashkenazi accent, life in nature versus the imaginary ghetto walls of the *shtetl*, physical labor versus a life of idleness and commerce, the young generation versus Jewry of the past, realization of a program versus empty Zionist speeches, and—above all—personal self-realization versus passive suffering in history. It took character and "a tragic mode" to do all that. Young Tsemakh attributes to Mrs. Pukhatshevski (1869–1934), a pro-Hebrew farmer and writer of the First Aliya, the thought that perhaps "there may be some truth in the rumors about those boys that began to arrive in Eretz-Israel, that they are inquisitive, despondent, nothing will satisfy them, and everything is flawed in their eyes as if all that was built [by the First Aliya] is irreparable." And Ben-Gurion described their personal qualities as "fanaticism, perseverance, and above all—rootedness" (1947:18).

The isolation of the few workers, the need for repeated clarification and reinforcement of their ideological motivation, and the very age of those young people without a world of parents—all intensified group life. Aside from work, most of them spent their time together, debating, organizing and splitting parties, as well as singing, dancing, and sharing meals. As soon as these frameworks were conducted in Hebrew, when Hebrew was imposed as the public language, its future was guaranteed.

This was the source of rural and urban labor collectives and, ultimately, of the small communal settlement, *kvutza* and the larger *kibbutz*. In terms of ideas, this was a democratic society, every individual participated in the public debates and

decisions. They had no preconceived or inherited norms—hence the debates themselves were central to their lives—and the debates were about the justification of their very existence here. As a historian of the Eretz-Israeli labor movement wrote, "the constraints of existence forced the worker to accept socialization, collective ownership, mutual responsibility, and the creation of instruments for that" (Braslavski 1955:100). And historian Mordekhai Eliav draws a picture of their lives:

An abyss opened [between the workers and the farmers] and the new immigrants felt total loneliness, on top of the natural loneliness characteristic of any new immigrant, especially in the areas of ideology, society, and spirit. The immigrants tried to alleviate their loneliness by molding a collective life and a special life-style, nourishing a national-romantic mood, and in heated ideological arguments, while persisting in their goal. Of special importance were the clubs that emerged in the various settlements and served as a focus for cultural and social meetings, parties, and dances, and even as centers of influence on the youth of the settlements. The periodicals of the parties, as well as books and pamphlets, alleviated their psychic needs, strengthened the spirit and tightened the ranks. (M. Eliav 1978:352)

The workers were young people, most were male but there were a few women too, most were unmarried and probably had a negligible or nonexistent sex life, outside of the few steady couples. They were isolated in a difficult land, under the corrupt and oppressive Ottoman regime. Instead of the Jewish Diaspora society, constructed vertically, in large family clans of several generations, here *groups of horizontal sections* were formed, people of a single age without previous ties of blood, without parents or grandparents; and also without children to be educated (in French, perhaps?). The cell of life was not the family but the age group sharing a common ideology and reading the new Hebrew journalism. There was a consciousness of the end of all previous history: the end of two thousand years of exile and the end of thousands of years of class warfare—in the name of a new beginning for man and Jew. Deliberately cut off from the world of their parents, from mother's tenderness, from grandmother's tales, from the customs and superstitions of generations, from the language and the food of their childhood, and, in fact, from the disgusting life of the *shtetl* and its dead-end existence—they tried to create a new world based on the self-education of the individual: to eat the strange and bitter olives, to work the land with a *turiya* (a hoe), and to speak Hebrew.

The social frameworks that arose in the labor movement—the political parties, the "Agricultural Federation," the worker collectives on the outskirts of the *moshavot*, the communes—all aspired to conduct their lives in Hebrew, written and oral. The *Ha-Poel Ha-Tsair* party accepted the principle of Hebrew, written and oral. *Partey Tsiyon* was attached to its party in Europe where Yiddish was written and as a cultural force and the working masses (who knew little Hebrew) could not be attracted by opposing Yiddish (see Yitzhak Ben-Tsvi's recollection, quoted in

Shapiro 1967:21). Ben-Gurion quotes a comrade who told him: "I am for Hebrew like you, but I don't know how to prove it by 'Historical Materialism,'" that is, by Marxist doctrine (Shapiro 1967:21). Indeed, Ben-Gurion and Ben-Tsvi even edited a journal in Yiddish, *Onjang* ("The Beginning"), but there was opposition to Yiddish and it closed after two issues. In 1908, this party too decided to switch to Hebrew.

Nevertheless, the breakthrough was extremely difficult both for the individual and for the group. Many workers spoke and loved Yiddish and opposed the artificial imposition of the difficult and poor Hebrew language by their intellectual leadership. The dominant ideology was Hebrew and no documents were left of it except for indirect accounts. Thus, in the third general assembly of *Tsayir* on Passover 1907, the workers voted against conducting the meeting in Hebrew, and the chairman, Yosef Aronovich, had to resign. Even in 1910, when David Ben-Gurion lectured in Hebrew at a conference of *Poalei Tsiyon*, the entire audience left the hall in protest, except for his friend (the future President of Israel) Yitzhak Ben-Tsvi and Ben-Tsvi's girlfriend Rachel Yanayit. But, in just a few years, Hebrew frameworks were imposed. A major factor that reinforced the implementation of Hebrew was party journalism, which supplied ideological and literary nourishment to this word-hungry society, as well as news, when Yiddish newspapers from abroad were not available. In addition, there was a virtual ban on all public activity (including theater) in Yiddish. The same assembly of *Ha-Poel Ha-Tsayir* that voted down a proposal to conduct the assembly in Hebrew, also decided: "No branch of our organization has the right to perform plays, conduct dances, or arrange public readings in *jargon* [= Yiddish]," as, apparently, they had done before (Greenzweig 1985:207). In 1914, the Fourth Conference of all workers of Judea was already conducted, at least nominally, in Hebrew. Only one faction, the *Left Poalei Tsiyon*, continued to promote Yiddish up to the beginning of the State of Israel.

Shlomo Lavi, later one of the founders of Kibbutz Eyn Harod, wrote:

It cannot be appreciated how much it costs a man to go from speaking one language to another and especially to a language that is not yet a spoken language. How much breaking of the will it takes. And how many torments of the soul that wants to speak and has something to say—and is mute and stammering. (Greenzweig 1985: 207)

The difficulty here is in changing the individual's base language to a language that is not yet the base language of any society. And "breaking of the will" did not refer to language alone. Even the intellectual Berl Katznelson reminisced:

In the first days, I had a hard time with Hebrew. I had never spoken Hebrew in my life. As a matter of fact, I saw Hebrew speech as something unnatural, so much so that [in Byelorussia] I had a teacher, a man who was very dear to me—and I caused him great grief. He spoke to me in Hebrew and I spoke to him in Yiddish because I thought Hebrew was not a spoken language. When I came to Eretz-Israel, I couldn't

make a natural sentence in Hebrew and I didn't want to talk a foreign language. I decided I wouldn't utter a foreign word. And for ten days, I didn't speak at all, when I was forced to answer—I would reply with some Biblical verse close to the issue. (B. Katznelson 1947b:85).

We see here, on the one hand, the difficulty of connecting words into sentences other than ready-made phrases; and, on the other hand, the stubborn decision to speak only Hebrew. And that was a spiritual leader of the generation who became a prolific writer and developed a personal Hebrew style within a few years.

There were differences in the human quality of the various waves of immigration. Most of the immigrants of the First Aliya did not have much education. But the workers of the Second Aliya included some who absorbed the intensive academic education of the Russian gymnasium (most of them studied as "externs" or with private tutors) and read a great deal in Hebrew, Yiddish, and Russian. Berl Katznelson, for example, grew up in an enlightened home and never went to any school; his father told him: You'll learn Russian when you know Hebrew well, which he did by the age of ten, then plunging into Russian literature, and from there to Yiddish; in their home, *Midrash rabba*, Dobrolyubov, Pushkin, and Mendele (i.e., religious Hebrew, Russian, and Yiddish books) were lying around on the table, and he himself wrote a paper comparing the Hebrew poet (and convert to Christianity) Abba Konstantin Shapiro with the Russian poet Lermontov (B. Katznelson 1947b:70). Whether they completed their studies or not, there was an "intelligentsia," in the Russian sense of the term, in the Second Aliya: that is, not necessarily members of the "liberal professions" but those who read profusely and ask critical questions about everything and elevate every issue to an ideological level. This essential distinction—between the education, the level of consciousness, the ideological commitment, and the cosmopolitan horizons of the immigrants who came after the failure of the Russian Revolution of 1905 and that of the immigrants of the 1880s—was similarly evident in Jewish New York and in the Yiddish literature created there.

Given this background, motivation was of paramount importance. Motivation bridged the rationality of the conceptual argument and the irrationality of the passion for personal realization. In an article titled "Language Insomnia" (or "Wanderings of Language," 1918; see translation in this book), Rachel Katznelson (future literary critic and wife of Israeli President Zalman Shazar) tells of the soul-searching torments between the emotional connection to Yiddish literature and the choice of Hebrew. "In the Kineret commune, there were discussions of the crisis in Socialism" (R. Katznelson 1946:9)—they were fourteen women workers, barely holding on to the land in the extremely hot Jordan Valley, with no other worry than the crisis of Socialism in Europe! (How similar this is to the sects in the Dead Sea desert, just a hundred miles down the river and two thousand years earlier!) And in this context, "I realized the revolutionary nature of Hebrew literature as opposed to Yiddish" (1946:9). "We had to betray Yiddish, every detail

we paid for this as for any betrayal" (10). "The revolution, the revolt of our generation against itself—we found it in Hebrew literature" (12) (my emphasis—B.H.). She admits that Yiddish literature "is more national than Hebrew" (14), but "after the failure of the Russian Revolution of 1905, when the situation of our nation was extremely tense, there was something tranquilizing in the best writing in Yiddish" (15); and she proceeds:

But that was not what we needed then, on the verge of the Second Aliya. For if we had had only the possibility of seeing and thinking revealed in Yiddish, we could not have thought our nation was still one of the great nations. (R. Katznelson 1946: 15)

Hebrew literature "restored our self-respect"—and the issue "did not depend on talent, but on the *free Man* with which Hebrew literature and its language captivated us. We yearned for Man" (15). Only Hebrew literature lacked the "censorship" that was felt even in the radical trends of Yiddish. "Here, people allowed themselves to think about the Hebrew nation out of freedom" (16). A similar distinction between the two literatures was made by Yitzhak Tabenkin:

Exposure of the revolutionary truth of the naked Jewish reality, Brenet's strong, open-eyed, critical, and analytical attitude—that is what Hebrew literature taught us. And it was this literature of that period, along with the ancient Bible, that educated the individual for his immigration to Eretz-Israel. (Tabenkin 1947:29; see the translation in this volume)

And Rachel Katznelson continues:

The creation of the spoken language began in Hebrew at the same time that the danger to its existence appeared [...] The transition of Hebrew from a reading language to a spoken language was done in literature. [...] The language created by Mendele and Bialik will save us from the dominion of foreign languages, and the New Hebrew Man will speak the language of Brenet and Gnesin. (R. Katznelson 1946:21)

Brenet returned the compliment. He saw the great wave of emigration from the Pale of Settlement in 1905–6, only splinters of which went to Palestine, and he describes them from the perspective of 1920:

The splinters did not become waves. Many ricocheted back to the ghettos of New York, London, Paris, etc. Only their vestiges are with us today, until a new, Third Aliya comes.

Yet those few who remained—remained. Adapted to the reality of Eretz-Israel, bought quinine instead of bread, were eaten by all kinds of plagues and insects, went up and down, down and up, and became one body, insolar as several hundred Jewish youngsters are capable of forming one body. The ideological differences disappeared—actually, became ridiculous. Marxism, if it ever was there, evaporated in the hard struggle of life, and the national idealism of their opponents became light in their own eyes, in their struggle for the existence of the worker as a worker.

Now this small, remaining camp is unanimous in its opinion that the redemption of the people of Israel and of the Land of Israel will come not by prophets and not by high politics, not by orange-grove owners and not by a spiritual proletariat, but by collectives of new working people who will arrive as a powerful force and in streams, directed by an organized collective-national arm toward the goal of settlements, in the form of *kvutsoi* (communes) or *moshavei ovdim* (collectives of individual farmers).

The main problem is: the problem of human resources . . . (Brenet 1947:23)

Such was the human aspect, the "new cells of society" that emerged in Eretz-Israel in the Second Aliya. The other side of the coin was the context of the country itself. In other countries of immigration, Jews also established a Jewish culture, at least for one generation: in Venice in the early sixteenth century, Yiddish literature lived among the Ashkenazi immigrants from Germany; and in New York, from 1882 to 1960, among Eastern European immigrants. For the individual, this was a transitional culture, lasting only one generation: most Yiddish writers in the modern age studied in a religious *heder* in their childhood, left that world and built a secular culture in Yiddish; and their children already lived in another language (English, Russian, Polish, or Hebrew). Unintentionally, secular Jewish culture served as a hothouse for a generation of immigrants from which they and their children emerged into the respective dominant cultures. This also happened to Hebrew writers and Zionists during the Enlightenment (the children of Mendelssohn, Mendele, Peretz, Slonimsky, Tseberbaum, and Herzl converted or assimilated).

In only one period did the Yiddish language succeed in surviving for a long time, passing from one generation to another: in Eastern Europe from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. The major causes were: a) the establishment of crowded Jewish town settlements or city quarters, spots of Jewish territory scattered over the area of other nations; b) the fact that most Jews lived among various linguistic minorities and not among the speakers of the ruling language (for example, among Byelorussians, Lithuanians, Poles, Latvians, and Ukrainians, under Russian rule); the peasants seemed lower than the Jews in social class and education, theirs was not a written culture, and, apart from picking up daily conversation, the Jews did not find it necessary to assimilate to them; the few representatives of power, such as the Polish landed aristocrats and bishops or the Russian administrative authorities, did not socialize with Jews and were too few to assimilate to; and the centers of the ruling culture were far and unreachable; c) the existence of a densely filled, comprehensive Jewish polysystem and a separate semiotics of discourse, couched in three Jewish languages and sanctioned by an official religious boundary, which gave cohesion to a separate Jewish nation.

Essentially similar conditions prevailed in Eretz-Israel at the beginning of the twentieth century: scattered spots of separate Jewish settlements were established; the rulers of Palestine, the Turks, were distant; the local Arabs were a subjugated

and backward minority; and those two languages were remote from the world of the immigrants from Russia, who claimed a higher level of culture. There were attempts to adjust. Ben-Yehuda became "Ottomanized" and proudly received his changed Hebrew name officially from the Turkish authorities; Ben-Gurion, Ben-Tsvi, and Moshe Sharet studied in Istanbul; Moshe Sharet (later: Israel's Foreign and Prime Minister) was an officer in the Turkish army. But it was not long before the government of Palestine changed, and the ruling language with it. The English language of the Mandatory government was also completely foreign to the world of Eastern European immigrants; neither was it the language of the surrounding population but of a distant power, which did not intend to stay there for good—nevertheless, the process of assimilating to English culture visibly began in the thirties, especially among the second generation and the German Jews who fled from Hitler and considered English a cognate "higher culture" and antidote to the Eastern European mentality of the Hebrew speakers. Still, the official Mandatory power recognized a separate Jewish political entity and thus preserved the Jewish monopoly inside that society, including the Hebrew nature of the affairs in Jewish towns, self-rule in education and other public domains, and a strong measure of internally imposed discipline.

The positive factor, however, was ideological: the existence of the new Hebrew society had nothing but an ideological justification; and that ideology saw Eretz-Israel as an embryo Jewish State belonging to the immigrants and sanctioned as a Jewish "homeland" by the League of Nations. With a few exceptions, they were almost blind to any national ambitions of the local Arabs. More precisely, the view of the Arabs was divided: in terms of fears, the Arabs were all around, and Hebrew literature was attuned to it; but, intellectually, this was not perceived as an Arab land, it was rather a "social wasteland" ready to fulfill the British Zionist Israel Zangwill's slogan: "A land without a people—for a people without a land." Hence, there was no culture in Eretz-Israel into which the immigrants could or would assimilate. In this vacuum, they established their own, secular polysystem and created a *Hebrew frame language* to absorb it. That is, public life and public affairs, journalism and education, were conducted, at least in principle, in Hebrew. But that was in the twenties and thirties.

Let us return to the Second Aliya. The title of honor, "Second Aliya," is generally bestowed on the founders of the labor movement; but most immigrants, even before World War I, went to the city, especially to Jaffa and Tel Aviv. The First Hebrew City, Tel Aviv, founded in 1909, arose out of the dissociation from the past and opposition to the world of the past, and a second opposition to the world of Jaffa. The *framework* imposed on life in the city was Hebrew from the start. The proudly pronounced adjective "Hebrew" in expressions like "Hebrew work," "Hebrew land," "Hebrew Federation of Labor," a "New Hebrew Man," and the "First Hebrew City" indicated an opposition to the discredited, Diaspora

name, "Jewish."⁶¹ But, this "Hebrew" quality was also self-evidently connected with the Hebrew language. Thus, a Hebrew city had to speak Hebrew, as part of the same revival package. The council of Tel Aviv planted trees (return to nature and concern for beauty), forbade the selling of alcoholic beverages, organized guard duty, and imposed the Hebrew language. On July 31, 1906, Akiva Arie Weiss, one of the first to promote the idea of a Hebrew city, distributed his *Prospectus* in Jaffa, in all of five copies. It said:

We must urgently acquire a considerable chunk of land, on which we shall build our houses. Its place must be near Jaffa, and it will form the first Hebrew city, its inhabitants will be Hebrews a hundred percent; Hebrew will be spoken in this city, purity and cleanliness will be kept, and we shall not go in the ways of the goyim. [...] In that city we shall arrange the streets with paved roads and sidewalks and electrical light. In every house we shall bring in water from the sources of redemption that will flow to us in pipes, as in every modern European city, and even sewers [in Hebrew: *kandizatsiya*] will be arranged for the health of the city and its inhabitants. [...] And in time this will become the New York of Eretz-Israel. (Shkhor 1990:33–34)

Cleanliness is a central motif in the documents and memoirs of the founders of Tel Aviv (see how many times the word is repeated in Shkhor 1990:31–54), and the planned city is explicitly opposed to the crowded quarter of Neve Tzedek that looked "like a Jewish Diaspora *shit!*" (1990:31). David Smilanski tells of the historical assembly in Jaffa toward building the new settlement, in the summer of 1906: though the participants spoke other languages among themselves, the assembly was conducted in Hebrew, and it was decided that, in the new city, all the protocols, accounting, correspondence, and office work would be conducted in Hebrew only (1990:25). Thus the relations between a frame language and an embedded language were doubly reversed: In Diaspora, Hebrew had been embedded within the frame of Yiddish speech and now it became the frame, with Yiddish (especially at home) still embedded in it; and in Jaffa, Hebrew was an embedded language within a frame of several other languages; but in Tel Aviv it became the official frame language of the city. The establishment of the first purely Jewish city in the world (after two thousand years) created a territorial base for Hebrew as the frame language of society, later duplicated in the kibbutzim.

In 1912, the new Hebrew Language Committee demanded that the national bank and other institutions insist on speaking only Hebrew with their customers (Eisenstadt 1967:73); and in 1913, Yehoash reports that the official language in the Anglo-Palestine Bank was indeed Hebrew: a special announcement was posted, requesting the public to speak Hebrew, the forms to be filled out were in Hebrew, and so on, and one of the important officials was the former teacher

61. Compare such American expressions as HIAS, *Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society*, and even "Hebrew National" salami.

Yehuda Gruzovski (later: Gur), who was working on his new Hebrew dictionary (Yehoash 1917, 1:171). In Tel Aviv, according to Yehoash, "Yiddish here is as impure as pork. To speak Yiddish in the street, a person must have tremendous courage" (1:158). His heart was moved by the "Marranos" who, to make a living, had to accept the "faith" of Tel Aviv (i.e., Hebrew), but after a young man in a *Maspéira* (barber shop) had finished all the words he knew in Hebrew and discovered that Yehoash would not betray him, he revealed to him the awful secret in warm "mame-loshn" (1:162).

Thus, the enlightenment saying, "Be a man in the street and a Jew in your home," was inverted into: "Speak Hebrew in the street and your own language at home." Hebrew triumphed in the framework of life. The reversal took place within four years of the city's existence!

In the Hebrew city, there was also a second wave of dissociation: the children who grew up in Hebrew in the school. The Hertseliya Gymnasium, one of the earliest buildings in the new city, had an important function: this was not a rural school only for the lower grades; it promoted instruction of genuine culture and language on the highest level, all in Hebrew. Yehoash (1872-1927), a Yiddish American poet who had no stake in Hebrew propaganda, tells of a group of Gymnasium students playing soccer in Tel Aviv in 1913:

There were the usual screams and tussles, but not even in the exciting moments of the game did a non-Hebrew word come out of their mouths. For me, that was the best proof that the language had penetrated to their souls and was an organic part of their personality. A great victory for the pioneers of the revival of the language. (Yehoash 1917, 1:160)

The Hebrew they spoke united the children of the Hebrew city. That is, here too, a *horizontal age stratum* embraced the new language as its own, creating a *second wave of severance*, and distinguishing them from their Diaspora-born parents. Characteristically, in countries of immigration, the first-generation immigrants work hard attempting to assimilate but are still perceived by their children as immigrants, ignorant of the new conventions and speaking a broken language with a foreign intonation. The children then try to dissociate themselves from their parents—in fact, in order to fulfill their own parents' dream of belonging to the new language and culture (see, for example, Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*). In this case, the language and its ideology were imposed on them by the idealist school, including the revulsion for the Diaspora as portrayed in Hebrew literature.

Indeed, the separation of age cohorts was the prominent sign of the emerging *Yishuv*: a child-oriented society if there ever was one. In Diaspora, the celebrated warmth of the Jewish family, expressing the drive to preserve the ever-threatened nation, was intended as a continuation of the chain of generations rather than as a break in it. Now, the children were one or two rather than twelve to a family, and the devotion to children was transformed into an apotheosis of the new "healthy" and "strong" race of the future. It was a society without parents, and,

for the children growing up, without grandparents; the former admiration for grandfather as the source of wisdom was turned upside down, and the orientation of life was toward the utopian future, to be implemented by the next generation. Hebrew newspapers and weeklies used to carry special columns of language teaching (mainly arguing about the meanings of words and fighting against "distortions" of the spoken language) as well as columns quoting the wisdom and language innovations of "our sweet *sabras* [native-born children]."

The whole society was based on ideology, hence the authority of the ideologically sanctioned institutions: the school, the youth movements, the kibbutz, the underground army. The awareness of the ideological supremacy of the school and its Hebrew knowledge; the centrality of the youth movement: ^{the intensive} group activity of one age cohort (in a warm country, with small apartments, where life is centered outdoors); and later, the *Palmakh* (voluntary military units) located in the kibbutzim—all of it separated the young age group from their parents, strengthened Hebrew as the language of the young generation, and created a new life-style and a new culture.

Various statistics show a much higher percentage of Hebrew speakers among the Israeli-born or the young as compared with the adult population, and this is true, with fluctuations, from 1914 to this day. In part, this reflects an identity statement: certainly, Hebrew schoolchildren could speak Hebrew, but even if they did not do so well enough, or all the time, they could not afford to say so. But beyond that, children really created their own social cells and separated from their immigrant parents' world by a magic circle of Hebrew speech.

During the time of the Second Aliya, however, most education in the cities outside of Tel Aviv was still in foreign languages—until the big strike of teachers and students, the "war of languages" of 1913, gave a serious blow to German education. Even in the "Hebrew-speaking" communities, evidence about the extent of actual Hebrew speech varies greatly, depending on the ideology of the witness. Brener, the idolized literary authority of the Second Aliya, who settled in Palestine in 1909, mocks the level of spoken Hebrew in that period. For example, in *From Here and From There* (1910) the character Diasporin says:

The Jews speak jargon [= Yiddish] here... Maybe in the editorial staff of *The Flow* they speak Hebrew, maybe the teachers with one another, but all the Jewish inhabitants of the place—the "aristocrats" speak Russian and the masses speak jargon... (Brener 1978a)

And even in *Bereavement and Failure* (1920), we read:

So, Shneurson was captivated lately by a Sephardi woman... The Sephardi woman, like all her friends... of course, knows Ashkenazi jargon [= Yiddish] very well—no less than Shneurson himself (the fools abroad imagine that Hebrew is dominant... That's a story too!) [...] Yet the two of them pretend that only the Hebrew language is what brings them together. (Brener 1978b:1636)

Or elsewhere:

After them, a refined young couple comes and sits down, a Hebrew-speaking couple. He is about nineteen, she is about sixteen—students in a national school. And amazingly, the content of their Hebrew talk this time is not about the pressing need for Hebrew speech, as usual, and not even about the emptiness and lack of meaning in life, but about another subject—about art itself! (Brenner 1978b:1666–1667)

Despite the satire, however, an important principle was achieved: Hebrew speech was the ideal horizon, Hebrew chatting was already possible, and in social life it was considered *bon ton*.

In sum, what was established just before World War I was not a complete Hebrew-speaking society but two bases: 1) Several *social cells*—primarily groups of workers and groups of children and youth—whose lives were conducted in Hebrew; 2) Several *public frameworks* that conducted their affairs in Hebrew. Within about seven years, from the decision of *Ha-Poel Ha-Tsair* to accept Hebrew as the national language—to the control of the schools (i.e., between 1906 and 1913), Hebrew in Eretz-Israel turned into the frame language of the Hebrew city, of the labor organizations, and of the “Hebrew” schools, and the base language of elite social cells.

During World War I, the Turks expelled most foreign citizens from Eretz-Israel, including the Jews of Tel Aviv, and the Jewish population shriveled (from 85,000 to 56,000, which included the Orthodox “old *Yishuv*”) and constituted only 10% of the population of Palestine. When the *Yishuv* recovered, in the wake of the Balfour Declaration and the British conquest of Palestine, and when waves of immigrants arrived after the pogroms in Russia in 1919, that is, in the Third Aliya that Brenner dreamed of, a Hebrew Secular Polysystem was established on the basis of the myth and ethos of the founding nucleus, the Second Aliya.

In 1918 the British army conquered all of Palestine and in 1922, the League of Nations officially established the British Mandate over Palestine, with the condition that the Mandatory power be responsible for the implementation of the Balfour Declaration; in paragraph 23, Hebrew was proclaimed one of the three official languages of Palestine. Thus, what had been a language of several small, isolated groups of teachers, workers, students, and the pioneers of the First Jewish City became the *frame language* of the whole country. It was precisely because the avant-garde of the Second Aliya consisted of only small numbers of “stubborn people” compressed in ideologically controlled social cells that Hebrew could be implemented almost in laboratory conditions. When some of them returned from exile, they imposed their myth about the revolutionary conquest of work and conquest of the language on society as a whole. The leadership of the *Yishuv* at the beginning of the British Mandate came from this small group (including the labor leaders Berl Katznelson, Yitzhak Tabenkin, David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Ben-

Tsvi), perhaps because they had the moral authority of having attempted self-realization and because they could speak Hebrew.

Berl Katznelson insisted that candidates for the Assembly of Representatives in 1919 could only be Hebrew-speakers, even though this decision affected some of his own comrades-in-arms, the soldiers of the Jewish Legion in World War I (many of them, from Britain and the United States); and that was barely nine years after he himself struggled to speak the language! His argument came from a pan-historical destiny: “In the life of the Hebrew worker in Eretz-Israel the question of languages does not exist. Hebrew history gave our people the land of Israel and the Hebrew language [only] one time. And the complete revival of Israel lies in the reinstatement of our people in its land and in its language, and in the renewal of a full, organic life.” (See Berl Katznelson 1919b, “On the Question of Languages,” translated in this volume.) Thus, Berl and the other Hebrew speakers of the Second Aliya dominated the institutions of the *Yishuv* when a new flood of immigrants arrived after the pogroms in Ukraine in 1919, the so-called Third Aliya, filled with socialist ideology, revolutionary impetus, and national pride. They also were socialists and could adapt to the revolutionary spirit and discourse of the Second Aliya, and enhance it.

If the Second Aliya created separate Hebrew social cells, a Hebrew city, and several institutional frameworks, it was only during the British Mandate that the Hebrew network spread over all of Palestine. Mandatory Palestine was what some sociologists call a *consociational State*, and the Hebrew society had its own separate network of political and educational institutions, officially conducted in Hebrew. Secular and religious political parties became legal and formed statewide networks. Since Turkish and French disappeared, Hebrew education took over and formed a statewide network, including a central Education Department, textbooks, and Teacher Seminars (as a matter of fact, there were several, separate educational organizations, affiliated with various political parties). The network of information and literature was covered by the modern Hebrew newspapers. Eventually, several underground military organizations that developed a system of wide-reaching mobilization emerged. But, except for the elected bodies, all these were voluntary frameworks.

A coherent and unified Hebrew Secular Polysystem, covering all aspects of social life, was launched by the labor movement—and to a large extent that accounts for the decisive power it attained in the *Yishuv*. Shortly after demobilization from the Jewish Legion in World War I, in 1919, Berl Katznelson wrote a proposal for the unity of the workers’ movement. The proposal clearly appealed to a nation on the move, a nation of immigrants. In the spirit of the Second and Third Aliyot—and just a year after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, which impressed all of them—he opens with the statement: “The workers’ movement in Eretz-Israel is a branch of the Socialist workers’ movement in the world, striving to free man completely from the oppression of the existing system which imposes private capital on the life of the nation, on its economic and cultural creation, on

the relations between people and States" (1919a:129). But, at the same time, it is a branch of the Zionist movement and its goal is: "The revival of the Israeli nation returning in masses to its land, striking root in its soil, creating its settlement and its work, and becoming a free nation, governing its own country, speaking its Hebrew language, arranging its life in its own domain, and creating and developing its material and spiritual treasures." In view of those twin goals, the united workers' movement would establish stations for the absorption of immigrants, a labor exchange, health services, a network for the distribution of products, a central cooperative of workers' kitchens, a workers' bank, a center for cultural action ("for spreading the language; and human, social, and professional education"), a free press, and a publishing house ("for the education and cultural enrichment of the worker"). Though some socialist parties in Europe had similar ambitions, here it is a program for the invention of a centralized State rather than a labor party.

Berl Katznelson and the leaders of the *Hista'adrut* ("Hebrew Labor Federation in Eretz-Israel," founded in 1920) implemented this vision when they established under its wings not only a federation of professional labor unions and a network of collective settlements but also: a construction company, *Solel u-Boneh* (Pave-and-Build); a concern for the production of building materials, *Even ve-Sid* (stone-and-plaster); an industrial concern, *Hevrat ovdim* (Workers' Company); a distribution network, *Ha-Mashbir La-Israkan* (Provider for the Consumer); a mutual-aid health organization, *Kupat Holim* (Sick Bank); workers' kitchens, *mis'adot podlim* (Workers' Restaurants); a publishing house, *Am Oved* (Working Nation); and a network of schools, *Zerem Ovdim* (Workers' Trend) (typically, those were two-word names like those of the old Religious Polysystem, e.g., the hospital society *Mishmeret Kholim* [Sick Guard], the burial society *Khevre Kadisha* [Holy Society], or the aid society *Gemiles Khesed* [Alm of Grace]). The major mouthpiece and informational base of this cluster was the newspaper *Davar*, founded in 1925 and edited by Berl Katznelson, which promoted Hebrew as the prevailing language in the society and allocated a place of honor for belles-lettres, as did newspapers in the Diaspora. (Its one-word name—like the one-word names of Diaspora Hebrew newspapers, *Ha-Melitz*, *Ha-Magid*, *Ha-Shahar*, *Ha-Shiloh*, or the Eretz-Israeli *Ha-Aretz*—was a plurisignifying term, meaning: "[concrete] thing," "Word," "[prophetic] sermon," "message," all in one, and thus epitomizing the return to Biblical connotations.) And soon enough, a whole network of journals covered the institutional network: a women-worker's weekly, a teachers' journal, a kibbutz kindergarten-teachers' journal, health publications, and so on.

The sweeping creation, almost overnight, of a secular polysystem with Hebrew as its frame language was so impressive that in 1922, the British Colonial Secretary, Winston Churchill, wrote:

During the last three or four generations the Jews have recreated in Palestine a community, now numbering 80,000, of whom about one-fourth are farmers or

workers upon the land. This community has its own political organs; an elected assembly for the direction of its domestic concerns; elected councils in the towns; and an organization for the control of its schools. It has its elected chief rabbinate and rabbinical Council for the direction of its religious affairs. Its business is conducted in Hebrew as a vernacular language, and a Hebrew press serves its needs. It has its distinctive intellectual life and displays considerable economic activity. This community, then, with its town and country population, its political, religious, and social organizations, its own language, its own customs, its own life, has in fact "national" characteristics. ("The Churchill White Paper," Laqueur 1969:47; also quoted by Ornan 1976)

Horowitz and Lissak wrote perceptively about the immigrants from Oriental countries that came to Israel in the 1950s:

The exposure of the immigrants from Islamic countries to the combined influence of the *industrial revolution*, the *secular revolution*, and the *national revolution*—occurred only upon their arrival in Israel. Here they had to integrate into a society whose institutions were formed by elite groups whose universe of values was crystallized under the influence of those three revolutions, and they strove, accordingly, to create in Eretz-Israel a nation-State, modern in its cultural character and economic development. (Horowitz and Lissak 1990:18; my emphasis—B.H.)

True. Yet almost the same can be said about those very "elite groups," the Ashkenazi founders of the *Yishuv*, when they first arrived in the country. Almost all of them were born in small towns, with no electricity or running water and little tolerance for secular behavior. They did not see there any industrial, secular, or national revolutions. Most of them broke out of the "medieval" confines of the *shetl* for a few years before they emigrated, but they derived the *secular* and *national revolutions* not from real life (in tsarist Russia?) but from books, ideologies, and arguments; it was no political reality they could have experienced, but the freedom of their own, voluntary, multiparty, Jewish Secular Polysystem in the making—conducted in Yiddish—where they could experiment with the new sensibilities, disregarding the totalitarian tsarist regime. After a few years of going through this revolution in their youth, a few of them went to Palestine and tried to implant those sensibilities in the new country by means of the new language. Certainly, very few of them had any experience with the *industrial revolution* until they accomplished it themselves in Palestine. Thus, modernization, embracing the secular, national, and industrial revolutions, and promoting avant-garde literature, was part and parcel of their Zionist realization and helped to expand the domains of the new language. The difference was that they underwent this triple revolution in their own lives, whereas the immigrants of the 1950s had to adapt to a ready-made situation.

The kibbutz movement too was not just a return to Jewish peasants or farmers; it strove to combine agriculture, industry, culture, and defense, that is, to create

in its small settlements a new, utopian class that would merge the classes of peasants, workers, soldiers, and intelligentsia. Every kibbutz movement established a publishing house, educational institutions, journals, and museums; and today, almost every kibbutz has a factory besides its fields, and often a museum or another cultural institution.

The kibbutzim, formed after World War I, were the quintessential form of the new society. Like Tel Aviv, those were purely Jewish settlements and, like the workers' collectives, they constituted new cells of young people conducting an intensive social life. Their social framework was Hebrew: the weekly assembly, education, cultural activity. For them, Hebrew was not simply a new language to supplant their first language while talking about customary matters; Hebrew carried a whole new universe of discourse and a new semiotics, reflecting domains of life entirely new both to them and to the Hebrew language. The terms for nature and agriculture—the entire context of their existence—were unknown to them in any previous language; in those domains, Hebrew was their first language. Hence, the “conquest of the language” was intertwined with the “conquest of work,” and with a new understanding of nature, love, the independence of women, armed self-defense, and a democratic or communist-democratic society. They learned all those new worlds of life along with the Hebrew words denoting them, which they uncovered or invented as they went along.

Unlike the workers' groups of the Second Aliya, the kibbutz was not an itinerant collective of mostly male laborers, but a village on its own land; it had to become a normal settlement to last for generations, and children now occupied an important place. The children were separated from their parents and received a “collective education,” intended to breed the New Hebrew, of sound mind and body, a person of the commune, endowed with collective consciousness. The parents' generation had already cut themselves off sharply from the Diaspora world of their parents. Now a second wave of dissociation was implemented, taking the main tasks of education out of the hands of parents, who might still retain some “Diaspora mentality” and “bourgeois” or “individualistic” habits. Collective and separate education included the exclusivity of the Hebrew language, which was separated from the murmurings in Yiddish or Russian in the parents' tent. The kibbutzim constituted only a small minority of the Yishuv, but, outside of Tel Aviv, those were the only purely Jewish territories; this is where the lofty myth of the new Eretz-Israel was implanted, and this was the educational goal of most Zionist youth movements in Diaspora (even if many of their members eventually ended up in the city). Hundreds of thousands of young people went through the kibbutz, its Hebrew society, and its Hebrew educational system. In the 1930s, children brought from Germany were also educated in a separate Hebrew framework of *Aliyat Ha-No'ar* (Youth Aliya), located mainly in the kibbutzim.

Thus, several stages of severance from the chain of generations and several waves of horizontal social cohorts in this young, antitribal society, combined with an

orientation toward the future instead of the past, under conditions of a voluntary society governed by an ideology, compressed on a small island isolated from the Jewish world of that time, and preserving dominance over newspapers and schools—created the frame of a Hebrew society.

The general outline of the evolution can be summed up thus: in the First Aliya, a few individuals emerged who could speak Hebrew but did not use it regularly. Several teachers with no formal education devoted themselves to learning how to teach the language, and their pupils carried the torch, mostly as individuals. The Second Aliya demonstrated the possibility of setting up enclosed Hebrew *new cells* in opposition to their non-Hebrew-speaking Jewish environment, and a *public framework of life* in Hebrew. In the Third Aliya, however, a *Secular Hebrew Polysystem* was constructed and imposed on the new Jews of the whole country, politically sanctioned by the Mandatory government. The written frameworks, the meetings and assemblies, the technical literature, and so on—everything was, at least nominally, conducted in Hebrew. The entire “organized Yishuv” operated like this.

At the same time, there is a great deal of evidence (mostly overlooked by the ideological studies of the history of Zionism) that, within this framework, the embattled Yiddish and other native languages continued their daily existence, though they were incessantly attacked, especially by the fanatic “Brigade of the Defenders of the Language.” On the third anniversary of the Brigade in Jerusalem, in 1928, Menakhem Usishkin, a prominent Zionist leader, said:

The Hebrew language was turned into “the solemn language” or “the beloved language”: official assemblies and Zionist conferences open in Hebrew; the official Zionist leaders, among them some who don't know Hebrew even after thirty years of membership in the Zionist organization, express sympathy for the language, and then the assembly or conference continues not in Hebrew. [...] Even “Hebrews” are treated as “Natives” in the full sense of this term [i.e., in a colonial, derogatory sense—B.H.J.] (Usishkin 1928:3)

The dangerous enemies Usishkin observed were “jargon” (i.e., Yiddish) and English, “the language of making a living” (*sfat ha-parnasa*). Of course, Usishkin was a fanatic; even in Odessa he threw the greatest Hebrew writer Mendele out of the *Bney Moshe* lodge for writing Yiddish. But, ultimately, the precarious balance in the “war of languages” was won for Hebrew in Eretz-Israel. Although, at home, many Jews still held on to other languages, the growth of a new generation, whose language was presented as the social ideal and who refused to learn the language of their parents, brought Hebrew speech into their homes as well. Whether or not they knew Hebrew well, they spoke it under the pressure of society and of their own children. As soon as Hebrew was established as the base language of society and the exclusive language of education, the matter was simply turned over to the young generation that grew up in the Hebrew schools.

The continuing waves of immigration did not upset the balance, first because many pioneers coming from Europe acquired the language in the new Hebrew schools and Zionist youth movements that emerged there; second, because of the powerful pressure the established ideological society exerted on all immigrant waves; and above all, because it is relatively simple to adapt to a language of an existing society, as in all countries of immigration.

The youngsters who carried out the revolution were a generation unto themselves. As a small, select kernel of stubborn, inspired, self-made men and women, they knew their own importance, unique in history. They shook off the established leadership of their own parties in Diaspora and, with time, took over the world Zionist organizations. Neither would they easily transfer the reins of revolution to the next generation. The power in Eretz-Israel, the leadership of all parties and David Ben-Gurion, Israeli-born and Hebrew-educated young people had no access to power. It is only the generation that emerged as young officers in the War of Independence, that provided a second echelon of a new leadership (Yigal Alon, Yitzhak Rabin, Moshe Dayan). To this day, most ministers in the Israeli governments are not Israeli-born. That may not be a language problem per se, but it certainly reflects something about the semiotics of culture.

TWENTY-SEVEN

Ashkenazi or Sephardi Dialect?

The rejection of the Diaspora and the "shtetl" world of their parents made the Ashkenazi revivers of the language choose what they thought was the "Sephardi" dialect for the new, spoken Hebrew. That was such a radical social and ideological decision that it needs further clarification.

In English and other languages, speech patterns have changed in the course of history, and only much later did the spelling stabilize; in Hebrew, the opposite was true: the sanctified spelling of the Bible was preserved in its minutest details throughout the ages, but different dialects, developed by Jews in distant lands and under very different foreign influences, gave rise to several different pronunciations of the same spellings.

Ashkenazi Hebrew pronunciation was formed in Central and Eastern Europe some time after the thirteenth century, then branched out into several dialects and survived in Orthodox communities until the present. This was the Hebrew language that had brought the Zionist immigrants to Eretz-Israel. Once here, they threw out even the Hebrew of their childhood, repressed whatever their memories could express in it, and chose a fundamentally different, foreign accent. Ben-Yehuda and the first Hebrew speakers in Jerusalem had compelling social reasons: the established Jewish community in Jerusalem was Sephardi, it carried the respect of the glorious Spanish Jewry, and the title "Pure Sephardi" (*Sfaradi tahor*) had an aristocratic ring to it. A similar connotation carried over to the language, as is indicated by the name of the society, *safa brura*, meaning "clear," "precise," or select language. Hebrew was not used in the daily affairs of the Sephardi community, except for precise reading of holy texts, hence the vowels were not changed and the words not contracted, as in the living language, Yiddish. Thus the Sephardi pronunciation sounded more prestigious than that of the Ashkenazi Orthodox Jews of the "Old Yishuv" in Jerusalem (who excommunicated Ben-Yehuda twice). It was also part of his romantic attraction for things Oriental.

There were also "scientific" justifications for the choice of the Sephardi pronun-

ciation. For example, the blurring of the distinction between the Biblical vowels *patah* and *kamatz* (and reading both as **a**) can be found in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Bible) and hence in European transcriptions of Biblical names (e.g., *David* rather than the Ashkenazi *Dovid*). The Biblical distinction between *milra* and *mil'eyl* (the place of stress on the ultimate and the penultimate syllable, respectively) was known to the Hebrew grammarians of the Vilna Enlightenment, Ben-Ze'ev and Adam Ha-Cohen Levinson (following the tradition of Hebrew and Christian medieval grammarians). This distinction favored the ultimate stress on most words, as performed in the "Sephardi" accent of the Near East. More important, it is indicated in the accent marks of the Bible, and a fundamentalist return had to consider it. But Biblical fundamentalism could also have claimed that the precise distinction of vowels in the Bible was better preserved by Ashkenazi and not by Sephardi Hebrew and that it was the Ashkenazim and the Yemenites who maintained the distinction between *patah* (**a**) and *kamatz* (**o**) and between the hard *tav* (**t**) and the soft *tav* (**s**).⁶²

Yehoash, who was impressed by the natural language of the young people who learned their Hebrew in the new, "national" schools, describes the effort and artificiality of the speech of the adults, even those who knew Hebrew well:

As for the language itself, that's half the grief. But the Sephardi accent... A pious Jew told me with a sigh that he tried over and over again to pray in the *Sephardi* accent but his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth and he didn't understand the "meaning of the words"... Since then, he decided that, in the street, he would do as they did in the street but, in the synagogue, give him the old accent of Shn'pishok! [A Jewish suburb of Vilna] (Yehoash 1917, 1:161)

When the immigrants of the Second Aliya arrived in Eretz-Israel, the so-called "Sephardi" pronunciation was already a *fait accompli*; the rural school in the agricultural settlements introduced the study of Hebrew and instruction of other disciplines in Hebrew, and the authority of the sages of Jerusalem was decisive for the few Hebrew teachers. But this was a grammar school that did not teach literature and did not even suspect that a great Hebrew poetry in the Ashkenazi dialect had emerged in Europe at that same time and had, indeed, influenced a new wave of Zionist immigrants.

Parents vehemently opposed the Sephardi dialect, strange to their ears, their prayers, and their understanding of Hebrew, but the few nationalist Hebrew teachers felt superior and imposed their will in the schools. The Teachers' Assembly in 1903, organized and influenced by Menakhem Usishkin (an activist characterized by his virulent hatred of Yiddish), who arrived specially from Odessa, decided on the Sephardi pronunciation for the new language. The teachers' orga-

62. Indeed, the Nobel Prize-winning Hebrew novelist Agnon, who never fully learned to speak in the Sephardi accent, regretted that the Yemenite pronunciation was not accepted; he apparently did not dare to mention the Ashkenazi.

nization was the major vehicle for teaching the young generation Hebrew and played a decisive role in implementing the accent. But they compromised too: the handwriting they selected was Ashkenazi!—Unlike speech that had to be invented, handwriting was inherited for generations, and that was, apparently, too hard to change, even for devoted teachers.

Thus the last gasp of the First Aliya determined the language of the Second. It was a fluke of history, the last collective effort of those few who, in principle, spoke the language and hardly knew the new Hebrew poetry that flourished in Diaspora, the teachers (and even that effort was organized from the outside). Indeed, the Second Aliya starts officially in December 1903, with the arrival of the refugees from the Homel Self-Defense. But it began in earnest only after the failure of the Russian Revolution and the mass emigration of Jews from Russia, in 1906, and was enhanced around 1910, when some of the intelligentsia of the Second Aliya arrived. The ideological, labor wing of the Second Aliya did not think about educating children until after World War I—and then it would be too late to change the language. And the immigrants to the cities surrendered their understanding to that of the established new school.⁶³

But, outside of this historical accident, there were strong social and ideological motivations in favor of the "Sephardi" dialect. For one, accepting the "Sephardi" dialect was eventually important for the melting pot of Jewish tribes in Israel; it was designed to bring the Sephardi Jews closer to the new Ashkenazi establishment, and the other tribes would follow suit. The Jerusalem propagators of the language, Ben-Yehuda and David Yelin (who intermarried with a Sephardi family), had the socialization with Sephardim in mind; and they did influence the teachers and the normative Language Committee. But this argument was irrelevant at the time of the formation of a Hebrew-speaking society in the lowland of Palestine. The labor movement and the settlers of Tel Aviv were absorbed in their own Russian-derived, intensively pursued, and "superior" world of ideas; they did not even see the Yemenites with their distinct accent and paid little attention to them. Galitsyaner S. Y. Agnon (until their own Brener discovered him).

Not less important: accepting the "Sephardi" accent helped overcome the boundaries between the various Ashkenazi subdialects, which provided a linguistic garb to the animosities, mutual contempt, and even hatred between Jewish ethnic groups that had lived for centuries in different territories: the *Litvaks*, *Poylishes*, *Galitsyaner*, *Romanians*, *Russians*, and *Yekes* (German Jews). Shlomo Tsemakh describes his first attempts to speak Hebrew:

63. As a matter of fact, we don't know much about the actual pronunciation of Hebrew by people who learned their first Hebrew in the Ashkenazi accent. Agnon, who arrived with the Second Aliya, preserved Ashkenazi features in his speech to his last day; and so did many members of his generation. In the old kibbutzim, you could still hear Ashkenazi traces in a general "Sephardi" stress-pattern: **oMARisi** rather than the contemporary Israeli: **aMARI**.

All the time, my words were accompanied by mighty waves of laughter rolling out of all mouths. My Hebrew language, this broken language of a Jew from Poland, which makes every U into I, every O into U, every long E into AY, and every long O becomes a prolonged OOO—this distorted language was certainly quite ridiculous. (Tsemakh 1965:80)

In Tsemakh's Polish dialect, the pronunciation was **BUrikh Aru** rather than the Lithuanian **BOrukH Ato**; instead of **eyn** they say **Ayen**, instead of **MElekh** they say **MAYlekh**, and so on. Also characteristic was the complaint about the diphthongs frequent in the Ashkenazi dialect, reminiscent of the sighing "oy" of the Diaspora Jew.

Tsemakh's inferiority complex for his Polish dialect—which in Diaspora was expressed in reverence toward the "pure" and "rational" Litvak Yiddish or Hebrew—was now transferred to the new "Litvaks," to the "pure" Sephardic pronunciation of the language (which he admired even in the speeches of the Ashkenazi teacher Yudelevitsh, delivered "in a beautiful Sephardi accent"). The new dialect would erase all tribal differences between East European Jews.

But the issue goes deeper than that: the basis for this inferiority complex lies, paradoxically, in the very fact that, in Ashkenaz, Hebrew was a semiliving language. Indeed, there were three modes of using Ashkenazi Hebrew (in all its dialects): Ideal, Spoken, and Fluent Ashkenazi.⁶⁴ a) *Ideal Ashkenazi* was reserved for reading the Torah in the synagogue; it consisted in pronouncing precisely every single sign of the canonical vocalization, with a fixed vowel assigned to each diacritic sign. b) *Spoken Ashkenazi* was the Hebrew that merged in Yiddish and hence was used as part of a living language; here, all final syllables lost their specific vowels (for some neutral e) and compounds were contracted into shorter words. Thus, the night-prayer was called *krishme* rather than the Ideal Ashkenazi *kriyas shma* ("calling the *shema*"); *balebos* rather than *ba'al ha-bayis* (homeowner; boss); and the feminine *baiboste* rather than *ba'alas ha-bayis*. Those who looked at the written words felt that the original sounds were distorted, "swallowed," abused. This, however, is a natural process in all living languages: French has, similarly, lost the last syllables in its verb declensions (still preserved in spelling); English can be seen as having "perverted" the German disyllabic **Na-me** into a monosyllabic **name** (pronounced **neym**), or **lachen** into **laugh (laf)**. c) *Fluent Ashkenazi* was the way authentic Hebrew texts were pronounced in study and argument, mostly under the influence of Spoken Ashkenazi—and this was the dominant way of pronouncing and hearing Hebrew. And on top of this, the Yiddish dialect distinctions were superimposed on all three ways of pronunciation.

From the position of a fundamentalist return to the written, pure and precise,

64. I described the three modes in *The Meaning of Yiddish* (1990a:55–57) under the labels "Ideal," "Merged," and "Practical Ashkenazi Hebrew."

Biblical language, this seemed a perversion, reflecting the perverse, sloppy, irrational behavior of Diaspora Jews. Even worse, the spelling of Hebrew in Rabbinic and Hasidic writings was influenced by this semispoken language and often disregarded Hebrew grammar.⁶⁵ Also, the gender of Hebrew words was often distorted under the influence of the spoken language, where Hebrew was part of Yiddish. The *Haskala* writers viciously parodied this style (notably, in Yosef Peri's anti-Hasidic satire, *Megale Tmirin*) and saw in it the deterioration of the Holy Tongue rather than the evolution of a living language and its dialects. The Zionists' sentiment inherited this revulsion toward Rabbinic and Hasidic Hebrew, especially in its wish to skip two thousand years of history and return to the wholesome Bible.

The stereotype, first formulated most harshly by Moses Mendelssohn, that Yiddish was a perverted language (as compared to literary northern German), reflecting the perversion of the soul of the Diaspora Jew, was as relevant for Ashkenazi Hebrew (as compared to the written Bible). The revulsion from this dialect, therefore, is a recoil from Diaspora existence, from the Yiddish language—the mother tongue, intimate and hated at the same time, from their parents' home in the *shetl*, corroded by idleness and Jewish trading, and from the world of prayer, steeped in the scholastic and irrelevant study of Talmud, and the irrational and primitive behavior of the Hasidim. The decision in favor of the Sephardi dialect was part of the ideological package the individual forced on his life. It seemed that the Sephardi dialect would free them from all those ugly sounds and dialectal discrepancies. Since its language was not spoken, it mirrored precisely the written words, clearly pronouncing especially the last syllable, now stressed, which was so contorted in Ashkenazi. In short, it was easier to learn a new language, beautiful and dignified, than to correct their own contracted, "cockney" Hebrew. But that move was aided by various ideologies.

Like other proponents of Hebrew, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, born in a small town in Lithuania, first abandoned Yiddish for Russian culture and even Russian nationalism and Slavophile ideology (influenced by the wave of Russian patriotism during the Russian war against Turkey in 1877–78, defending the Slavs in Bulgaria). Then he went to Paris, where he met a Russian named Tshashnikov, who encouraged him in the idea of Jewish national revival:

I happened upon a "Goyish head," a man with a simple mind, a natural man, who saw things in the world as they were and not through broken and perverted light beams, the way things looked to the crooked brains in the over-clever head of the Diaspora Jew. (Ben-Yehuda 1986:66)

65. For example, the suffixes pronounced in Israeli Hebrew as **at**, **ot**, **et** (feminine genitive, collective noun, feminine plural, respectively) and in Ideal Ashkenazi as **as**, **us**, **oys**, were all conflated into the same **-es**. In spelling, they were often confused and interchangeable.

Under the influence of this idealized Russian, Ben-Yehuda shifted his nationalist fervor from Russian to Hebrew. He had no respect for the Hebrew of the Ashkenazi religious world but, on the contrary, was impressed by anyone who spoke with a hint of a Sephardi accent: the writer Yehiel-Mikhal Pines, who came from Jerusalem to Paris; Getzl Zelikovitch (later a Yiddish poet and professor of Semitics in Philadelphia), who brought it from his travels in the East; the Jews whom Ben-Yehuda encountered during his own sojourn in Algiers; and, later, the people of the Sephardic cultural milieu which he knew during his long years in Jerusalem. In his memoirs, he describes his shock when he and his wife first came to Jerusalem and were invited to the home of the editor of a Hebrew newspaper, *Havatsalet*: they spoke Yiddish there and Ben-Yehuda's wife was asked to cover her head with a kerchief—and there she was, a "young woman who just came from Europe where she was exposed to a *free life* and had very nice brown hair" (Ben-Yehuda 1986:90; emphases mine—B.H.). The opposition is: European culture and individual dignity versus the "Diaspora" (i.e., Ashkenazi) restricted Jewish world. Ben-Yehuda also aspires to edit a "Hebrew political national [i.e., secular] newspaper, in the European meaning of those words" (90). But he finds the ideal of beauty in the Eastern world. Even on the ship to Eretz-Israel, he is impressed by the Arab passengers: "Tall, strong men [...] I sensed that they felt themselves citizens of that land," while "I come to that land as a stranger, a foreigner" (84). The admiration for the East also included Sephardi Jews:

Most of the people of the old *Yishuv* [i.e., the Orthodox Ashkenazim] were not natural human beings, leading natural lives, making a living like everybody else. Only the Sephardi community [...] was more or less a natural community, for most of them were simple people, uneducated, supporting themselves with crafts and simple work. (95)

And he goes on:

Why should I deny it? It is a better, much nicer impression that was made on me by the Sephardim. Most of them were dignified, handsome, all were splendid in their Oriental clothing, their manner respectable, their behavior pleasant, almost all of them spoke Hebrew with the owner of *Havatsalet*, and their language was fluent, natural, rich in words, rich in fixed idioms of speech, and the dialect was so original, so *sweet and Oriental!* (97; my emphasis—B.H.)

Clearly, the language was part of a total package in which the Ashkenazim were on the negative pole, as he said explicitly:

The Ashkenazi visitors of all classes all had a Diaspora countenance. Only the older ones [...] were already a bit "assimilated" into the Sephardim and looked a bit like them. [...] And the Diaspora stamp was a bit wiped off their faces too. (97) In another place, he gets excited:

How much the Sephardi Jews love cleanliness and how strict they are about it even in the secret places, the most private rooms. [...] And all household and cooking utensils were truly sparkling with cleanliness. (106)

Ben-Yehuda is aware of his one-sided value judgment: "I mentioned this detail here incidentally because it is one of the reasons that influenced me later in my relationship toward Sephardim and Ashkenazim" (107; my emphasis—B.H.).

Although Ben-Yehuda knows "that, scientifically, there is no true or false pronunciation" (205), he assumes that "the dialect used among western [i.e., European] Jews is from a late period, from the time of the spoilage and distortion of the language" (212), and he fights for "the Oriental dialect": "It is the dialect of the Hebrew language that is alive in Eretz-Israel, and everyone who heard it spoken by the new generation is stunned by its beauty" (212). But the admiration combines beauty and strength:

[because we lost the Oriental ring of the letters *tet*, *ayin*, *kuf*] we deprive our language of its force and power by the contempt we have for the emphatic consonants, and because of that, the whole language is soft, weak, without the special strength the emphatic consonant gives to the word. (203)

Despite the acceptance of the Sephardi accent in the schools, Ben-Yehuda understands its superficial nature and the prevailing general tone of the Ashkenazi heritage; he fears that we may be too late: there are already thousands of children speaking Hebrew, and their language is "so un-Oriental, so lacking in the ring and force of an Oriental Semitic language!" (204). Indeed, when the new Language Committee begins to work again in 1911 and sees its main task as coining new words, they decide to appoint among its members persons "whose knowledge of both languages, Hebrew and Arabic, is beyond any doubt." In the *Foundations* of the new Language Committee, written by Ben-Yehuda, presented by David Yelin, and accepted by the Committee (published in 1912), the first paragraph defines "The Function of the Committee" in two points:

- 1) to prepare the Hebrew language for use as a spoken language in all matters of life [...]
- 2) to preserve the Oriental quality of the language [...]

(Academy 1970:31)

The conclusion is: to demand the study of pronunciation in special classes and by a teacher of the Arabic [sic!¹⁰⁶] language. In 1915, the Hebrew Language Committee in Jerusalem decided

to compel all schools in Eretz-Israel to appoint a special teacher for pronunciation and to select for this position in particular one of the sages of Aleppo [that is, not a trained teacher, nor a member of the Ashkenazi community to which the children in the new settlements belonged, but a Syrian Jew whose native language is Arabic—B.H.]. (207)

66. Reuven Sivan, the editor of this text, assumes that there must be a mistake here and that he meant to say "Hebrew," but there is no evidence for this conjecture, and why would one have to stress that the Hebrew teacher must be the one to teach Hebrew pronunciation?

(The "Sephardi" dialect that was chosen was essentially the dialect of the Jews of Syria; Aleppo, or Haleb, in Northern Syria had an influential Jewish community.) Ben-Yehuda, who was opposed to absorbing words into the new Hebrew from any non-Semitic languages, thought it advisable to use *all the roots of Arabic to enrich the Hebrew language*. Since Ben-Yehuda and David Yelin had influence on the few Hebrew teachers, the Sephardi accent was, basically, accepted, but the Oriental nature of pronunciation he dreamed of was contrary to the whole mentality and intonations of the new immigrants, and never took root.

On the contrary, the ultranationalist and gifted poet and writer Ze'ev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky, in his book *Hebrew Pronunciation* (still trying to mold the pronunciation of the new language in 1930!), opposed the Arabic pronunciation and claimed that our ancestors did not speak with an "Arabic accent" either. Canaan, he argued, was teeming with races, including the "remnants of the nations of Europe and Anatolia," that is, *Aryans* (sic!), all of whom were swallowed up within Judea and Israel:

Thus the Hebrew was formed as a Mediterranean man, in whose blood and soul several aspirations and several flavors of the nations of the North and of the West were blended. [...] To set the rules for the pronunciation of the renewed Hebrew, Arabic but in Western languages, especially in those which were born or developed on the shores of the Mediterranean. I am sure, for example, that the general impression of the sound, the "prosody" of ancient Hebrew was much more similar to that of Greece and Rome than to Arabic. (Jabotinsky 1930:6-8)

And he adds:

I admit openly and confess that the guiding "taste" for the outline proposed in this manual is a European taste and not an "Oriental" one. In my proposals, the reader will find a clear tendency to get rid of all those sounds which have no basis in the phonetics of Western languages—to bring our pronunciation as close as possible to the concept of the beauty of sound prevalent in Europe: that concept of beauty, that musical yardstick according to which, for example, the Italian language is considered "beautiful" and the Chinese language is not. I chose this yardstick, first of all, because we are Europeans and our musical taste is European, the taste of Rubinstein and Mendelssohn and Bizet. But also from the objective side of the problem I am sure, for reasons I explained above, that the pronunciation proposed in this book is truly closer to the "correct" pronunciation, to the ancient sound of our language as spoken by our ancient forefathers than is the pronunciation that imitates the Arabic gutturals; let alone the slovenly pronunciation, lacking any line or rule or taste, with which we jargoned [i.e., Yiddishized] our speech and defiled our language, one of the most splendid and noble languages in the world, to the point of a noise without variation or character. (9; my emphasis—B.H.)

Thus, Jabotinsky too preached the renewal of pronunciation as part of the ideological and emotional package, but, according to him, "beauty" is exemplified not by Arabic but by Italian, and Yiddish (which he himself used in political speeches

and articles) is even uglier than Arabic. He even ingeniously finds a similarity in the ideal language English: "A *furtive patah*, for example,⁶⁷ is a characteristic quality of English pronunciation: *par, deer, door, poor*, pronounced **peyah, deyah, doah, poah** [sic!]" (7).

Although, in his opinion too, it is impossible to guess the sounds of the Hebrew pronunciation in the time of our forefathers, Jabotinsky has no doubt that one thing is clear—their pronunciation was marked by an outstanding precision. They did not speak hastily, they did not swallow syllables, did not confuse vowels—in short, they did not know the sloppy way of speaking that is heard now in our streets. (3)

The hatred for Yiddish stands out:

First of all, we have to avoid the Yiddish **ch**, which is like the hoarse cough of someone with a throat disease. Even the German **ch** in the word *doch* is too guttural. We should learn from those Jews of Russia who speak without a Yiddish accent the proper pronunciation of the Russian letter *X*. (My emphasis—B.H.)

Thus the Russian writer Jabotinsky, himself a native of the Yiddish-speaking city Odessa, barely one generation out of the "ghetto." Like the teachers of modern Yiddish secular schools in the cities of Diaspora, he too regarded the singsong of the provincial Jew as something melodramatic and harmful. And what venom permeates his words, ostensibly written as a scientific, medical recipe:

Do not sing while you speak. This ugliness is infinitely worse than every other defect I have mentioned and, regrettably, it is taking root in our life. Both the school and the stage are guilty: the first, out of sloppiness, the latter, out of an intention to "revive" for us the ghetto and its whimpering. *The tune of the ghetto* is ugly not only because of its weeping tone which stirs unpleasant memories in us: it is also ugly objectively, ugly in the scientific sense—ugly as all superfluous or exaggerated efforts. [...] That sick frenzy, which we also suffer from in our social life, is also the result of the Diaspora—an abundance of forces with no field and no outlet for the repressed storm except to explode in a bowl of soup—the "singsong" of ghetto speech is nothing but an echo of this national disease. The exercise that helps against the disease is very simple: exercising monotony—"monotony" in the scientific sense of the word, that is, lack of all vacillation in intonation. (37-38; my emphasis—B.H.)

In the debate over the dialect among the teachers in Rishon Le-Tsion in 1892, someone brought up the advantage of hearing Hebrew from parents and in the synagogue, in the Ashkenazi dialect, and the danger that if the school introduces the Sephardi dialect, the student's "mind will be confused." Y. Grafovski (Gur) responded:

67. As in the Hebrew letters *ayn* and *het* at the end of a word, which acquire an additional *a* vowel after a previous vowel: *reah, koah, luah*, etc.

It is better for the children not to understand the mistakes of their fathers, who read without preserving the vocalization and not correctly. Let the child talk in a correct Sephardi accent, let him get used to that, and there is no damage if he does not understand his father's dialect. (Karmi 1986:80; my emphasis—B.H.)

Thus, the second dissociation from the past was supported by education. Indeed, the religious "old Yishuv" and the parents of schoolchildren in the settlements fought against spoken Hebrew, the national school, and the Sephardi accent, all of which seemed to undermine the religious tradition. Mrs. Pukhatshevski from Rishon Le-Tsion told proudly of a demonstration in Jerusalem organized by two wagonfuls of settlers from Rishon, headed by the teacher David Yudelevitch, and speaking Hebrew aloud in the street; the Jews in Jerusalem said: "Look, *goyim* speak Hebrew!" (by *goyim* they meant secular heretics). She tells the story as evidence of the miracle of living Hebrew speech but does not recognize the religious scorn for the national movement.

But, out of great concern for the correct pronunciation of the future farmers, the connection was also broken with the new Hebrew poetry, whose flourishing was no less miraculous than the revival of the spoken language, even though it happened in Europe.

Secular Hebrew poetry grew in the soil of Hebrew study in the religious society, against which all Hebrew poets rebelled in their youth. At the base of his poetic language, a poet will use his most intimate vocabulary as he heard and absorbed it in childhood, with all emotions and connotations attached to it and in the multidirectional context of texts and images it evokes. This is especially true for a language remembered from childhood and youth, when they were immersed in it for long days, year after year, and not heard in the adult milieu. Hence, in spite of the knowledge of grammar that claimed a different, "correct" (as Bialik later admitted) pronunciation, Hebrew poetry accepted the intimate, Ashkenazi pronunciation of their childhood and created many variations of musical meters and sound patterns in it, both in original poetry and in translations. With the change of pronunciation, all this poetry of the Renaissance Period, in fact, has been lost as rhythmic texts. From the point of view of Hebrew poetry, this was the second language revolution, a tragic one. If Bialik's poetry is taught today in Israeli schools, it is not taught as poetry that activates the reader's sense of rhythm, but rather as a bundle of well-known ideas, a reconstructed biography, or a texture of devices and figures.

Many poets were opposed to the "Sephardi" shift and felt that the musicality of the Ashkenazi pronunciation, with its many vowels and diphthongs and its flexible and balanced stress position, was lost in Israeli Hebrew. But Hebrew poetry was not in Eretz-Israel when the decision was made (by such estranged and pro-Oriental zealots as Ben-Yehuda or coarse agitators as Usishkin). Bialik was the idolized "National Poet" and had an immense influence on his readers around the world; Hebrew literature in Europe educated the generations of immi-

grants, but did not understand or believe in the importance of the dialect revolution that occurred in the "primitive" Yishuv. Most of them did not believe in the language revival altogether, in its feasibility, or in the cultural level of the Palestine Jewish peasants.

With the exception of Brener, most important Hebrew writers settled in Eretz-Israel only after the Bolshevik government banned Hebrew in Russia in 1921, and many went first to Western Europe and came back even later. Thus a new alienation between literature and living speech was artificially created—and this was the very literature that developed the language to an extent that it could be activated in speech! The poet and critic Ya'akov Fikhman, for example, tried to oppose the shift to the Sephardi accent in poetry up until the mid-1930s; the master lyricist Ya'akov Shteynberg wrote poetry in Ashkenazi Hebrew to his dying day (1947); Tshernikhovski compromised, wrote declarative poems and ballads in Sephardi Hebrew and went on writing many of his important works in Ashkenazi Hebrew; even Shlonski and Uri-Tsvi Grinberg, the avant-garde poets of the pioneers, persisted in writing in the Ashkenazi accent in Eretz-Israel until 1928—an accent their readers did not speak. The poetess Rachel, however, who did not know Hebrew from religious education, wrote in the simple, new Hebrew spoken around her, combined with words from the Bible she read in the "Sephardi" accent. And there were a few other poets like that. One of them, Tsvi Shats, who founded a Zionist commune with Trumpeldor back in Russia and was later killed by Arabs along with Y. H. Brener in Jaffa in May 1921, wrote an essay entitled "The Exile of our Classical Poetry," in which he posed the problem sharply:

The main reason why [Hebrew] poetry cannot be absorbed among us is its foreign accent. With all its beauty and depth, it will not make our heart beat *because it is not molded from the coarse clods of our life or from the harsh or joyous tones of our life, which vibrate on our lips every day* [...] Its value is like that of poetry written in a foreign language. (Shats 1919:24; my emphasis—B.H.; see his essay in this volume)

But he admires the poets of the Revival Period and concludes: "May we wish that *Shneur, Tshernikhovski, and Bialik be translated into our pronunciation!*"—a wish unfulfilled to this day (my emphasis—B.H.).

This is the perspective: our language is pioneering, coarse, strong, masculine—like the "masculine" rhyme imposed by the Sephardi accent as opposed to the soft, "feminine" rhyme dominant in Ashkenazi poetry (as in Italian). There is no better example of that than the harsh, emphatic stress on the ends of words which Ben-Gurion emphasized with great energy as if he had to overcome an opposing tendency.⁶⁸

The "Sephardi" accent quickly spread all over the Diaspora, especially in Zionist-influenced Hebrew schools. It represented the challenge of secular nationalism

68. In Ben-Gurion's pronunciation, paradoxically, even though a strong stress falls on the last syllable, the last vowel seems to be contracted, even swallowed, as in the Yiddish of his native central Poland: **poalM vekhayaLM, beyaMM ruFM Ele** (but there the last syllable is not stressed!).

to the religious tradition. Those were schools that had to break away from the religious world steeped in Ashkenazi reading of the Holy Tongue. But the Ashkenazi accent fights for its position to this day and is clearly the only legitimate accent in the eyes of many Orthodox Jews in Diaspora, as can be seen from the English transliterations of Hebrew words in newspaper advertisements by Orthodox groups, including the Lubavitcher Rebbe in the *New York Times*, or from his long lectures, delivered in Yiddish with some 80% Hebrew words pronounced in his ultra-Lithuanian Ashkenazi dialect. A typical case was in interwar Vilna, "Jerusalem of Lithuania," where a compromise among the secular Hebraists was made: elementary school in Ashkenazi (called, accordingly, **beySEYfer aMOmi**) and Gymnasium in "Sephardi" (hence called **tarBUT**—and not **TARbes**).

But here comes the surprise: *the Hebrew finally accepted as the basic language in Eretz-Israel is not Sephardi Hebrew at all, but rather the lowest common denominator between the two main dialects, Sephardi and Ashkenazi.*

The group that established Hebrew speech in social cells were young Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe, from a Yiddish background, who went through processes of restraint (Jabotinsky's plea for "monotone") and aestheticization. This group accepted the Sephardi accent in principle, without having much contact with Hebrew-speaking Sephardim, but filtered it through its previous linguistic habits. Indeed, it was a harsh passage, as to a completely new language, when a person who read or wrote Hebrew had to give up **KEYses** or **KOYsoys** ("glasses" or "goblets") and say **kosOT**; the stress is reversed, the vowels reduced and changed, and the soft **s** at the end turns in Israeli Hebrew into a hard **t**. The harshness of the language was felt in the strongly accented endings of most words, mostly on closed syllables.

Indeed, the entire system of sounds shifted, yet ultimately, both **s** and **t**—that is, familiar sounds—remained in the language (with many more **t**'s than before). As the linguist Haim Blanc showed, in *Israeli Hebrew, not a single sound was added which was not in Yiddish*, except one—the glottal stop—which is not a consonant requiring pronunciation but a zero sound, a pause before a vowel: the Israeli speaker distinguishes between **lir'OT** ("to see") and **liROT** ("to shoot"), **mar'A** ("mirror") and **maRA** ("gall bladder"), **TSA'ar** ("grief") and **TSAR** ("tsar"), **me'IL** ("coat") and **MIL** ("mile"). The Ashkenazi dialect made no distinctions here and pronounced both words in each pair as its second member in our list (many Ashkenazi Jews, including Prime Minister Shamir, cannot pronounce the zero consonant and still use the short form in both cases). As Haim Blanc demonstrated in the 1960s, high-school graduates of Oriental origin speak like Ashkenazi high-school graduates, disregarding the Arabic gutturals and other consonantal distinctions. In recent years, perhaps a stratum of Oriental Jews who pronounce the guttural **het** and even **ayin** has been added; as for all other consonants, the Ashkenazi filter succeeded among all educated people.

With the vowels, however, it was the "Sephardi" filter that succeeded in Israeli

Hebrew. All Biblical vocalizations are pronounced with only five basic vowels—**a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, **u**—instead of the eight vowels and diphthongs in Ashkenazi, the ten vowel-signs in the canonical Bible (or the seventeen differently pronounced vowels in the Random House English Dictionary).⁶⁹ Ashkenazi speakers accepted this minimal, "Sephardi" norm, partly out of hatred for the diphthongs **ay**, **oy**, **ey**, which symbolized Diaspora whining (**oy vey**, **ay-ay-ay**, **oy-oy-oy**), partly to create a more dry, matter-of-fact, rational, and "monotonous" intonation, and especially because they accepted the authority of the Sephardic "pure" language without a second thought. As a result of this extreme reduction, in Israeli Hebrew about half of the vowels in an average text are **a**; for example, what is pronounced **khazOke (a-O-e)** in Ashkenazi becomes **khazaKA (a-a-A)** in Sephardi Hebrew. Simplicity has been achieved, but what is lost is the rich variety, that "culture of language" which accustoms the speaker to subtleties of nuance and serves as a base for poetic musicality. Even worse, the majority of the nation, including many of its poets, does not know how to write correctly the vocalization marks, indispensable in Bible and in poetry, because the vowel distinctions, preserved in Ashkenazi Hebrew, have been erased from Israeli speech. (Most publishers employ a specialist "vocalizer" (*nakdan*) who can place the vowels in poetic texts or in children's books.)

Thus, *Israeli Hebrew combines the range of Ashkenazi consonants and Sephardi vowels—the minimal range in each case.*

A similar process took place with stress. The so-called "Sephardi" stress is totally artificial and was never used in this form in a living, spoken language. In terms of rhythmic balance in long words, the predominant Biblical stress on the end of the word was possible when, in the middle of the word, there was a rhythmic variation of another kind, namely of long and short syllables. Indeed, that variation between long and short—rather than the end-stress—became the basis of the meters of Hebrew poetry in medieval Spain. The great linguist Roman Jakobson defined a general rule for all languages: when the distinction in length of vowels in a language disappears, the stress shifts from the margins toward the middle of the word. But in Hebrew pronunciation, the distinction between short and long vowels disappeared in all dialects, under the influence of other languages, at a time when the language was not spoken and natural processes could not take place. In Ashkenazi Hebrew, perhaps because of its strong integration in the spoken Yiddish, such a shift of stress to the penultimate syllable did occur. But in the artificial, "Sephardi" (actually, Syrian) reading of Hebrew, the rigorous stress on the ultimate syllable was preserved—which is not characteristic at all of the living language Ladino or in Sephardic ballads. As a result, a "Sephardi" stress often comes at the end of a long word of three or even five syllables,

69. Naturally, when two vowel signs, or a vowel followed by the consonant **y**, come together, a diphthong is created, but for every single sign there is only a single vowel; and the combined diphthongs are a small minority in the language.

with no rhythmic balance in the middle, and must be strongly emphasized in pronunciation, to carry the whole word.

The living Israeli language accepted that artificial norm for traditional word patterns but balanced it by profusely extending the groups of words with penultimate stress: proper names, emotional and slang expressions, and foreign loan-words. Most proper names are simply pronounced with penultimate stress, even if the nominal pattern is end-stressed: **DAvid**, **SARa**, **mcNAkhem**, **MEir**, even **Itamar**—though by the Bible they should be stressed on the final syllable. In the use of non-Hebrew words, Israeli Hebrew adopted the Yiddish model, which absorbs most of the international words with a penultimate stress and in the feminine gender: **gymNASya**, **traGEDya**, **koMEDya**, **filharMONit**, **simFONya** (though the major foreign language influencing Hebrew today, English, often stresses the third-to-last syllable: **TRAgedy**, **COmedy**, **SYMphony**). That same model which originated in Eastern Europe is also applied to words borrowed directly from Western languages: **teleVizya**, **kaSEta**, **eksistentiaLIsm** (though in French, the accent is on the last syllable: **exisTENTiaLIsmE**, and in English on the fourth from the end: **exisTENTiaLIsm**); and such adjectives as: **baNALi**, **reALi**, **elemTari**, **popuLari** (all different from their English counterpart: **BANal**, **POpu-lar**, **elemENtary**). However, in foreign words that get in Yiddish (as in German) the stress on the ultimate syllable, the stress shifted in Hebrew to the third from the end, as in Russian: **poLItika**, **Fizika**, **MUZika**, **uniVERsita**, a stress position otherwise almost unknown in Hebrew.

This pattern may have come from the language habits of the East European immigrants. But then this became the productive mode of accepting foreign words in Hebrew. Since most of these penultimately stressed words end in **a** and are therefore automatically feminine, the proportion of feminine nouns in the language—otherwise a minority of nouns—is considerably enlarged. Furthermore, such nouns are coordinated with their adjectives and verbs, which all become feminine and penultimately stressed too. Poetry and songs also soften the language and tend to rhyme with alternating masculine and feminine rhymes; hence, the large number of nouns in the feminine gender in poetry and song, which enable a penultimate stress: **oMEret-khoZErEt**, **oHEVet-nilHEVet**, **simloTEya-hish-taGEya**, and so on. Feminine patterns are also popular in neologisms, such as **taYEset**, **taKEVet**, **matKOnet**, **mishMEret** (squadron, train, recipe, shift). And, in addition, an emotive emphasis may draw the stress of a word toward its beginning. Thus the impression of the language as a whole is tipped against the Sephardi final stress.

This is not just a phonetic issue, it gives a specific character to Israeli speech and its speakers. And beyond that, this is the basic mode of the whole revival in Eretz-Israel: an ideological decision and a drastic imposition of a new model of behavior, radically different from the Diaspora past, is accompanied by a *subtext* of old behavior, which reemerges with time: the Jew comes out from under the Hebrew.

TWENTY-EIGHT

Remarks on the Nature of Israeli Hebrew

An analysis of Israeli Hebrew in a broad cultural perspective—including the language of literature, journalism, and science—still awaits detailed research and comprehensive models. I will sketch here a few general ideas, as hypotheses for further discussion.

Opposition to the Diaspora was initially expressed, as in other countries of immigration, in changing last names (see Toury 1990) and preferring new first names. The names of central Biblical figures, popular in Yiddish, seemed too Jewish and fell into disfavor (though some still gave such names after their grand-fathers); those include the names of the fathers of the nation and its prophets: Moshe, Avraham, Sara, Dvora, Rivka, Yitshak, Yirmiyahu, Yeshayahu, Yehezkiel, also the non-Biblical Hayim. Instead, some preferred “meaningful” names (**Zohar**, **Rina**, **Tikva**, **Geula**, i.e., “Light,” “Joy,” “Hope,” “Redemption”) or names from nature (**Ilan**, **Ayalá**, **Rakefet**, **Narkis**—“Tree,” “Deer,” “Cyclamen,” “Narcissus”) or “Biblical” names that are not typically Jewish, that is, of unfavorable Biblical characters that were not widespread in European Jewry (**Boaz**, **Ehud**, **Yoav**). A well-known Israeli writer, born Monyek Thilimzoger (literally, “Psalm Rectifier”), arrived in Israel at age 15 without his parents from the impending Holocaust in Poland; his name was changed in the youth colony Ben-Shemen to **Moshe Shaoni** (from “watch” or “clock”; apparently, **thilim**, “psalms,” seemed too religious, and **zoger**, Germanized to **zeger**, was misunderstood as **zayger**, “watch”); but becoming a real Israeli, he disliked “Moshe” and realizing the artificial nature of his new last name, changed his name again to **Dan Ben-Amotz** (for a long time, he did not reveal in his biographies that he was not a native-born Sabra, until he told the story himself, in his fifties).

Hebrew words identified with Yiddish words were also rejected. The Israeli says **Yareath** (moon) and not **levana**, as in Yiddishi **tsibur** (the public), not **olam**; **me'unyan** (interested), not **ba'alán**; **rotse** (want), not **hafets**; **ymama** (a 24-hour day), not **me'et-le'et**; **ta'anug** (pleasure), not **mekhaye**; **mikha** (sustenance), not

khiyuna; adam (man), not *yehudi; isha* (woman), not *yehudiya; menahel* or *akhrayi* (person in charge), not *ba'al-ha-bayit* (boss; though this too is used in slang); *more* (teacher), not *melamed; tosa'a* (result), not *po'el-yotsey; le-hashpiya* (to influence), not *lif'ol; bekhayay* (my word!); not *bene'emanut; sofer* (writer), not *ba'al-mekhaber; petsa* (wound), not *maha; shoded* (robber), not *gazlan; khabibi* (term of endearment); not *rotsakh; rekhilut* (gossip), not *leshon-ha-ra; ivrit* (Hebrew), not *leshon-kodesh; yevre* (Gentile), not *arel; beit-kvarot* (cemetery), not *beit-olam*.

Most of the Hebrew expressions in Yiddish came from post-Biblical strata of Hebrew and were rejected in Eretz-Israel either because of the tendency to get away from both the world of religion and that of Yiddish or because of a more precise differentiation between synonyms (for example, *olam* in contemporary Hebrew means "world" and cannot also denote "the public"). A contemporary Israeli reader is not likely to understand precisely the language of Brenner or Agnon—the preceding generation of Hebrew literature—the language of Brenner or Agnon—because of the preceding generation of Hebrew literature—especially when a Yiddish phrase or idiom stands behind the Hebrew sentence.⁷⁰

The fate of Aramaic is a separate case. In the Religious Polysystem and in the world of Yiddish, Aramaic was part of the "Holy Tongue." In the Traditional Library, there were pure Aramaic texts (the *Kaddish*, parts of *Gemara, Akdamuth Milin, Had Gadia*, and the classical book of the Kabbala, the *Zohar*). Yet the active "Holy Tongue," the language of writing, was primarily Hebrew: the syntax was Hebrew, and the framework of discourse was Hebrew. Aramaic was not fused into the Holy Tongue but was embedded in it: Aramaic texts embedded in the Hebrew Library, and Aramaic phrases embedded in a Hebrew text.⁷¹ With the revival of Hebrew literature in Diaspora, Aramaic received a special position and an important stylistic function; in Yehuda Leyb Gordon and Mendele Moykher Sforim, it signaled living speech, that is, Yiddish. Berditshevski, in an affectionate essay, wrote: "We do not have one literary language but two, [...] two nations bickering in your belly, [...] Hebrew and Aramaic. [...] the Hebrew language loves the sublime. [...] And the Aramaic language [...] is a language of the sharp proverb and morality. [...] the language of the humility in your heart, the language of religion, the language of the Jews" (Berditshevski 1987:101). In his stories, Brenner embedded many Aramaic phrases, sometimes coined by himself, intermingled with International, non-Hebrew words.

But the Hebrew purists also fought against Aramaic. Klauzner claimed that *casus belli* is permissible in Hebrew but not *sadna d'area* ("human nature is the same everywhere"). Uri-Tsvi Grinberg, of the other camp, called his journal *Sadna D'Area* (published in 1925 in Eretz-Israel). Those who came from the yeshiva or from Yiddish loved Aramaic. But victory in the struggle went to the purist Klauzner: some Aramaic spellings were Hebraized and only a few overtly Aramaic

expressions remained in the Israeli literary language, seasoning it like Latin expressions in English, such as *sui generis* or *casus belli*, which have not been fused into the language but signal the technical use of a learned language. It seems that the Hebrew speaker wants one, recognizable Hebrew language, and if some foreign language is quoted in it, it had better be a language he knows. The religious connection between the two is meaningless to him today.

The new Hebrew language had to define its boundaries against both Yiddish and the Holy Tongue, though it drew on the resources of both. Thus, expressions from the world of religion and Talmud and translations of Yiddish proverbs and idioms were often rejected when recognized. Nevertheless, after all the purges of the purists, Yiddish ways of expression have penetrated Israeli idiomatic speech and Israeli slang (Yiddish itself derived many of those from Talmudic as well as European sources). Vast layers of Yiddish subtext underlay the ostensibly archaic, "Holy-Tongue" Hebrew of Agnon. It is interesting that also distinctly Biblical elements were exposed as naive and outmoded. Thus the three basic European modes of time, reflected in three tenses of the verb, were accepted; and the Biblical reversal of future into past, abolished. Despite the veneration of the Bible and its endless study in schools and adult circles (including Ben-Gurion's Bible Circle), the language of the Bible is markedly not Israeli Hebrew—and is kept apart. Though many know large portions of the Bible by heart (having studied it for ten or twelve years), the use of a Biblical phrase in Israeli Hebrew has the function of a quotation from another language. Thus, the return to the Land of the Bible and to the Language of the Bible involved a national and social ideology formulated in the language of European thought, and included a rejection of the innocent world of Mapu's "Love of Zion."

In sum, every stratum of language that is too reminiscent of one of the religious texts—Mishna, Talmud, Torah, or Prophets—is rejected in the Israeli base language and may be used in literature as a stylistic device (as we said earlier, the vocabulary of all those texts is an open store for modern Hebrew).

The result of these tendencies is that, from the perspective of the Hebrew sources, the Israeli language is a fusion language. It uses a certain range of language options from the past, on condition that the words or idioms are context-free, do not demand expertise in their sources, and do not mark the text as a mosaic of styles. From the point of view of the language user, a radical reversal occurred: in the past, there was a library of texts, from which the individual could draw words and phrases; now, there is a fused "repertory" of the living language, an active vocabulary and word-combinations employed in the base language or in specific idiolects and genres of discourse, irrespective of their origins. This "living" vocabulary may be used by anyone, irrespective of whether or not he is a "native" speaker.

In morphology and basic syntax, most of the forms were determined unequivocally, and most do prefer Biblical to Mishnaic forms. The real revolution took place in semantics and macrosyntax. The structure of the complex sentence and

70. See examples in my Hebrew essay, Harshav 1990b.

71. Of course, the ancient influence of Aramaic on Hebrew itself is a different matter. "Hebrew" includes here whatever was absorbed by it in the texts of the Library: Greek, Arabic, Latin, Aramaic.

the paragraph follow the constraints and licenses developed in the logical writing, political commentary, and belles-lettres of Europe and America (although not all the long-winding, complicated periodic sentences of German or Russian were absorbed into Hebrew). The revival of the Hebrew language began from this world and attempted to match it with Hebrew expressions, rather than the opposite. It is not a case of speakers who grew up in Hebrew and had to expand their horizons but of people who learned Hebrew in the religious library of their childhood, then discovered the modern world and were absorbed by its ideologies, which had an overwhelming explanatory power—provided to them in Yiddish and other languages—and from here they went back to find Hebrew words for the new needs. Hence, it was relatively easy for Israel to become a modern nation. Instead of a base of Biblical Hebrew or Rabbimic Hebrew, which would have slowly grown and absorbed concepts from outside, a *European base was formed within modern Hebrew which observed selected Hebrew rules of morphology and absorbed concepts and expressions from all directions: from the international vocabulary and from the Hebrew library as well.*

Most of the words in an Israeli Hebrew text—a journalistic, scientific, or literary text—are new words, in form or meaning. It is precisely the indefatigable effort of the purists to substitute "Hebrew" or Hebrew-shaped words for foreign words that has filled the Israeli language with an international world of concepts, disguised in Semitic garb. *The law of style* encourages the "seasoning" of texts with words and expressions deviant from the medium, including words from foreign languages, original innovations, and non-Israeli collocations from Hebrew sources. This law also includes the rules of "good taste," which does not allow such "seasoning" to go beyond a certain limit, so as not to damage its status of an *embedded minority*. Hence, it is precisely the processes of change of non-Hebrew words into Hebrew or Hebrew-looking roots that made room for the introduction of new foreign words and translations of new concepts. As a result, Hebrew is a Semitic language only in the genetic and etymological sense, concerning only basic vocabulary and morphology. From every other perspective, it is an ally of the modern European languages.

Here, for example, is the opening of an editorial in the Israeli newspaper, *Ha-Aretz* of Friday, October 27, 1989:

The Missile Race

One of the television networks in the United States, NBC, has broadcast information stating that a missile built jointly by Israelis and South Africans was launched on the fifth of July from a certain place in South Africa, to a distance of fifteen hundred kilometers toward a group of islands in the direction of Antarctica.

Our broadcast network reported that the Prime Minister "denied reports" on the aforementioned subject, while the Minister of Defense confined himself to stating the standard version that Israel will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the area. The Minister of Trade and Industry could say that the cabinet discussed nuclear weapons and came to a decision on the subject under discussion.

יוס'ו, כ"ח בתשרי התש"נ
27 באוקטובר 1989

הארץ

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מירוץ הטילים

אחת מרשתות הטלוויזיה בארצות הברית, "אויביס", פרסמה דריעה לפיה פיל שנבנה כמשתוק על ידי ישראלים ודרום אפריקאים, שוגר בחמישה יולי ממקום מסוים בדרום אפריקה למרחק של אלף וחמש מאות קילומטרים בכיוון קבוצת איים השוכנים כדרך לאנטרקטיקה.

רשות השידור שלנו מסרה כי ראש הממשלה "הכחיש ריחמים" על הנושא הנ"ל, בעוד ששר הביטחון הגביל את עצמו להשמעת הנרסה. השגררת כי ישראל לא תהיה הראשונה שתכניס נשק גרעיני לאזור. שר התעשייה והמסחר ידע לספר כי הקניטס ון בחימוש גרעיני וקיבל החלטות בנידון.

Clearly, the Hebrew text can say the same thing and in the same way as the English text (and vice versa). The excerpt includes:

1. International words: *kilometer, television, Antarctica, July, cabinet, Africa, NBC.*
2. New Hebrew words for international terms: *race, [television] networks, missile, launched, report, nuclear weapons, Minister of Trade and Industry, area* (in the sense of geographical area), *the United States.*
3. Phrases that represent Euro-American concepts: "*has broadcast information stating that,*" "*a certain place,*" "*standard version,*" "*denied reports,*" "*nuclear weapons*" "*fifth of July,*" "*Israel will not be the first,*" "*confined himself to stating the standard version.*"

In this editorial, there are almost no older Hebrew words with their old meanings.

4. The microsyntax, concerning contiguous words, or immediate constituents, is essentially Hebrew: the coordination of verb and noun; the use of the

definite article, prepositions, and connectives; the genitive phrases. Yet, the macrosyntax is European: the sentence in the first paragraph accumulates five stages of states of affairs, which could not be done in the syntax of traditional texts.

Despite all that, as a result of the renewal of the language, the roots of most of the words are Hebrew or quasi-Hebrew. Thus, new concepts and the European macrosyntax were absorbed as part of the base language of Israeli Hebrew, which is open to absorbing new material just as the entire culture of Israel is open to the changing world.

This was the real achievement of the revival of the language: the creation of a language to absorb the culture and civilization of the Western World on the basis of the forms of words in traditional Hebrew. It was accomplished by Hebrew literature, Hebrew journalism, the secular Hebrew high school, and the Hebrew labor movement.

TWENTY-NINE

Principles of the Revolution: A Retrospective Summary

Now we may disentangle the twin strains, the social and the linguistic, and observe that the revival of the Hebrew language was accomplished in two different large moves, one linguistic and one social:

1. *The revival of the language itself*, that is, the transformation of a language of a library of religious texts into a comprehensive, modern language.
2. *The transformation of a nuclear society to a new base language, Hebrew.*

These two moves were interdependent but not overlapping. They are, indeed, two diachronic processes, or *intertwined systems*, hence both repeatedly mirroring each other and asymmetrical.

1. *The first move, the revival of the Hebrew language*, was a long-range process, beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century (with earlier antecedents) and continuing uninterrupted to this very day. It was a cumulative, evolutionary process, with three distinct stages:
 - a. The revival of "Hebrew literature" in the broad sense, that is, the extension of a religious language into the secular, representational, and aesthetic domains—which took place in Europe, especially from the end of the nineteenth century.
 - b. The transformation of Hebrew from an embedded language into the base language of a minority society, which has to cover all areas of life and imagination encountered by that society, including daily affairs, social-political relations, and the imaginative world of their reading habits—this took place in Eretz-Israel just before and after World War I.
 - c. The transformation of Hebrew into the language of a State, responsible for the linguistic base of all the institutions and systems of a modern State—this took place with the establishment of the State of Israel.
2. *The second move, the transformation of Hebrew into the base language of a society*, began as the result of a unique historical junction of three social-