

# The unabashed truth

By ISRAEL ELDAD

AT THE ROOT of my thinking is the approach that there are matters in which the standards of Western democracy cannot be applied, for we are still in a revolutionary process. In a revolution, all serves the ideal, and Zionism, for me, is a revolution. Moreover, Zionism cannot be fully compared to other movements of national liberation for its task has no parallel: to bring back the Jewish people to Eretz Yisrael. I make these points in reference to an article by Yosef Goell (A Cynical Exercise, *The Jerusalem Post*, March 28, 1983), which referred to one of mine in *Ha'aretz*.

It was clear to the fathers of Zionism that this country was not empty, and at the time of the Balfour Declaration Jews constituted but 10 per cent of the population here. This situation surely did not comply with the Wilsonian Principles — specifically, that of self-determination which the Arabs claimed in their favour. And in a formal sense, they were correct.

Chaim Weizmann, however, did not hesitate to reply in 1920 that there was an element of injustice for the Arabs, but a relatively minor injustice is to be preferred to a major tragedy, which would be (and was) the case for the Jews without a state.

But the Arabs never ceased to protest the giving by one people (the British) to another people (the Jews) the country populated by a third people (the Arabs).

What this means is that there is no universal application of principles at all times in this complex political world. It is possible, of course, to oppose Zionism outright, but once you consider yourself a Zionist, you must assume this first limitation on the Wilsonian principle of self-determination *vis-à-vis* a land called Palestine, a land none other than "Zion."

THE SUPREME task of Zionism,

territorial concentration of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael. Or, in other words, the Judaization of the land.

In the name of this right, we demanded certificates of immigration from the British authorities and we did not agree, in the name of equality, to the granting of certificates to Arabs. (In any case, they crossed the borders in their tens of thousands even though we protested against this.)

In the name of this right, the cardinal law of the country is the Law of Return, which permits the unqualified entry of Jews, and Jews alone, as well as automatic citizenship for Jews, and Jews only, for all intents and purposes.

In my understanding, this law is far from democratic purity. This is a discriminatory law in favour of Jews. If it were not for the fact that Judaism is non-racial in that any *goy* can become Jewish, it could even be labelled racial discrimination.

Does Goell think the Law of Return discriminatory or not? Would he propose rescinding it, as it does not conform to the norms of Western democracies?

SINCE THE GOAL of Zionism has not yet been fully achieved and since we still struggle, as Zionists, for an increase in aliya for the benefit of the Jewish people (who face physical dangers and spiritual pitfalls) and the benefit of a Jewish state surrounded by Arab countries with a sizeable Arab minority, the Law of Return is still valid.

With the given ups and downs in the aliya rate, there is a concern for our own internal ally: the Jewish birthrate.

There is a similarity between our increase from without and the Law of Return, on the one hand, and our increase from within and the Children's Allowance Law, on the other. David Ben-Gurion understood the problem and with the first court case concerning it, he

families by the National Security Institute, just as it funded aliya. This meant, of course, that the discrimination was enlarged.

Goell uses a very heavy cannon against me in using analogies of discriminations applied to Jews by anti-Semitic countries. In defending the Catholic nature of Poland, Grabski formulated economic measures that led to the Fourth Aliya, as similar circumstances did in Rumania.

I take for granted that Goell is not only "Israeli," but a Zionist as well (I have no argument with non-Zionists). As such, he cannot deny that Zionism from the start, embarrassing as it may be, was predicated on anti-Semitism (just like in Egypt) as an undeniable fact. Jabotinsky expressed it best as the "anti-Semitism of things," of objective conditions, without the subjective evil and hate.

Not in vain did the liberal Jews claim, in waging their fight against Herzl and Zionism, that the movement was becoming an ally of anti-Semitism. Theoretically speaking, they were correct; in principle, no democratic person should have aided those anti-Semitic countries by proposing the Zionist solution.

If we carefully research what was accomplished as a result of the waves of immigration from Poland, Rumania and Germany, which originated in anti-Semitism, then we must admit, shamefully or not, that the very existence of this country is based on the utilization, if not exploitation, of discrimination. Is this immoral or undemocratic?

This was the truth before the establishment of the state and continues to be true as long as Israel is guided by Zionist principles. Israel is an abnormal polity, and every state is a function of territory and population. And yet, Israel is the only state established not for its own population but, in the main, for those Jews still to come, willingly or otherwise.

## Dry Bones



principles of Zionism over all others, marvellous as they may be. The ingathering of Jews and their concentration here in Eretz Yisrael is a holy crusade, not only because of what happened in the past, but because of what can happen in the future. The discriminations practised against us in Poland, Rumania, Czarist or Communist Russia caused the emigration of Jews and aided in the setting up of Israel. In my view this is not a tragedy nor would it be if the Arabs would follow in the footsteps of the Jews. If they feel discriminated against, then I would praise them if they would choose to go to one of 22 Arab countries.

ONE last point. Goell quotes a biblical verse, one of many, that expresses the demand of equal treatment for all those in Israel, including the sojourner.

whether Goell would accept its application today on behalf of sacrifice, or even Jewish prayer, on the Temple Mount. That verse was based on the Exodus from Egypt, which was not entirely democratic. Moreover, it was pronounced by the same man and in the same book that excluded equality for the Canaanites and other residents of this country. The source for that quotation is the same source for the conquest of Eretz Yisrael, at any price. Is he being discriminatory in his selection of verses?

The Bible divided this country among the tribes of Israel, and no other, not Ishmaelites nor Canaanites. When the Arabs see themselves as sojourners in this country, in the true sense of the term, then of course we will fulfil the biblical precepts in their entirety.