

Zionism and the Land of Israel

February 18, 2011

Household Issues

- 1) Discussion papers
- 2) News reports for the next week: connected to issues we discussed
- 3) Summary at end of class
- 4) Attendance

From last week

- 1) Ideology (elite), built on religious commitment
- 2) Demise of labor party

From last week: The effects of ideology

Cultural: Israel 2011: An ideological society in a post ideological moment (sports teams, need to form an opinion, yearning for young committed people vs. cynicism)

Political: Difficulty in accepting others

Territory – Why should we care?

- Three pillars of the course
- Woody Allen death and war: land
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFCTx1PFchY>
- Woody Allen: “He was an Idiot, but I loved him”.
- Between irrational idiocy and emotion: What are your own experiences ?

Territory in the context of Israel

- **Zionism's goals:**
 - 1) Obtain a right to a territory
 - 2) Transfer people into the territory
- **Israel's current challenge:**
 - 1) Counter challenge to completing claim to the land, decision what to do with the new territory (1967)
 - 2) Economic control over territory

How Relevant to Current Events?

- Explains current conflicts
- Explains possible solutions/options
- Allows to interpret the culture

Secular vs. Religious Zionism

	Jews are	Right to the land
Secular	National group/civilization	Historical connection/necessity
Religious	Based on transcendental decree	Endowed by God, the true owner of all lands

Religious approach: The covenant

- **Genesis 17**
- **1** When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty ; walk before me and be blameless. **2** I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers."
- **3** Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, **4** "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. **5** No longer will you be called Abram ; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. **6** I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. **7** I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. **8** **The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."**

Two Religious Perspectives

- 1) Instrumental
- 2) Mystical

Religious: Instrumental

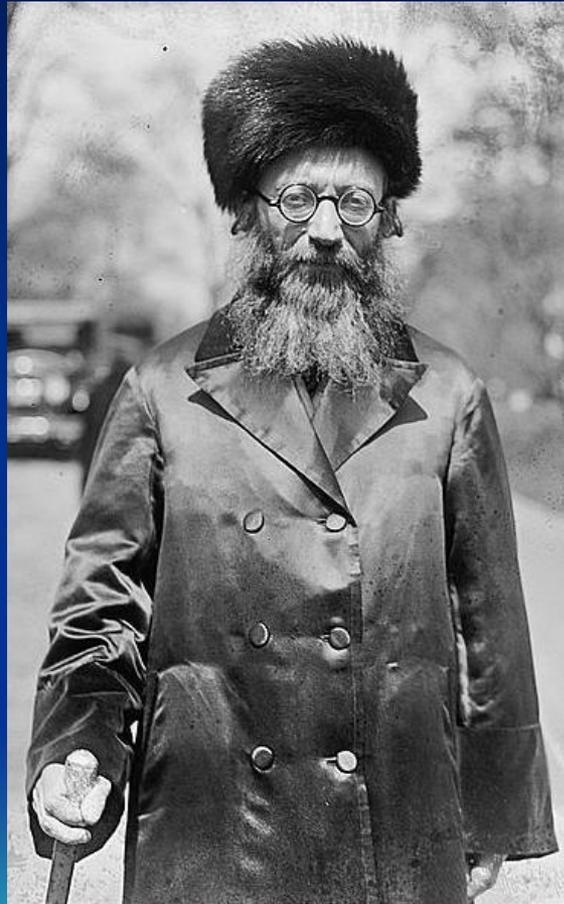
- Israel: the only place a Jew can be “complete”

Religious/Mystical

- Land is a physical depiction of metaphysical ideas.
- The unique connection between people and land will produce an effect of universal proportions

- Do you see any similarities between the religious and secular approaches ?
- - for the individual?
- For the nation?

Rabbi Avraham Kook (1865-1935)



This [image](#) is in the public domain.

Four Zionist Approaches

	Self image	Right to the land	Means
Labor	Just, progressive, constructive	Physical need, healing Judaism, Arab acquiescence, international legitimacy, historical, utilizing the land	Facts on the ground (owners of the means of production), international
Left of labor	Moral	Universal task/self determination	Bi-national state
Revisionist	Realists	Historical/need/ international legitimacy	Use of force/diplomacy
Right of revisionist	Use of force in the past		Use of force in the future

Declaration of Independence (1)

- the Land of Israel, was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.
- After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Declaration of Independence (2)

- immigrants coming... revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture

Declaration of Independence (3)

- immigrants coming... made deserts bloom...bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants

Declaration of Independence (4)

- the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country.
- This right was recognized in the [Balfour Declaration](#) of the 2nd November, 1917, and reaffirmed in the [Mandate of the League of Nations](#) which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Israel and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.

Declaration of Independence (5)

- On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable.

Declaration of Independence (6)

- In the Second World War, the Jewish community of this country contributed its full share to the struggle of the freedom- and peace-loving nations against the forces of Nazi wickedness and, by the blood of its soldiers and its war effort, gained the right to be reckoned among the peoples who founded the United Nations.

Declaration of Independence (7)

- The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people - the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe - was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State

Declaration of Independence (8)

- confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the community of nations... This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

Political Dilemmas: When territory collides with other values

- The 1903 Uganda Debate
- Partition (1937, 1947, 1967)

Territory and political implications

- Effect on political dominance (Kimmerling, Turner)
- Effect on political divisions (1903, 1967)
- Debate about real estate – or beyond?

Opposition to Zionist Claim to the Land

- Ultra Orthodox Jews: Accept the principle, object to its implementation
- Diaspora thinkers (Zweig/Boyarin/Steiner): True Judaism is passive, non sovereign, has a universal-moral mission “I admire the painful idea of the Diaspora”. Against a state of “guns, flags, and military decorations”
- Palestinian/Arab: Jews not nation; dispossession

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

17.565 Israel: History, Politics, Culture, and Identity
Spring 2011

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.