

Americans Who Became Israelis: Early *Olim* (1948–1963) Look Back

Maxine S. Seller

There is extensive scholarly literature about Jewish immigration to the United States; however much less has been written about Jewish emigration from the United States. This is a study of the latter. More specifically, it is an oral history study of American Jews who immigrated to Israel as young adults during the first fifteen years of the Jewish state's existence and who (unlike many of their peers) stayed to build families and careers and become Israelis.¹ The number of American *olim* (immigrants) during these early years was small relative to Israel's rapidly expanding European, Asian, and North African immigrant population (less than 0.4 of 1 percent in 1950) and smaller still relative to the total Jewish community in the United States (less than 0.2 of 1 percent in the mid-1960s).² Nevertheless, this admittedly atypical group is of interest for two reasons. First, as an educational and occupational elite, they had an impact on Israel in its formative years much greater than their number would suggest.³ Second, understanding early American *olim* adds to our understanding of American Jewry, American Zionism, and the relationship between the American Jewish community and the state of Israel.

In the years immediately following World War II, young American Jews had every reason to be optimistic about their future in the United States. The traumas of the Depression and the war were behind them. Anti-Semitism was far from dead, but progress was being made against housing restrictions and educational quotas. Young Jews were attending universities in unprecedented numbers and joining their non-Jewish counterparts in the move to the rapidly expanding suburbs. Yet a small number of young American Jews swam against the tide. This small number chose to exchange a comfortable, secure, and promising life in postwar America for the privations, uncertainties, and dangers of the new Jewish state. To understand what motivated them to do so and what their experiences have been like, I interviewed twenty-five Israelis who grew up in the United States and immigrated to Israel between 1948 and 1963. Unlike many, perhaps most, American *olim*, who eventually returned to the United States, my interviewees still lived in Israel at the time of the interviews, in 2002 and 2004.

My study begins with the interviewees' childhoods and their immigration to Israel as young adults and then follows them through the half-century or more of their lives in the Jewish state. I have limited the study to *olim* who came before the mid-1960s because I wanted to exclude as factors the social turmoil

of the mid- and late 1960s and the drama and aftermath of the 1967 Six Day War. More important, I wanted to interview people who had come early enough to participate in most—or in some cases all—of the country’s history and who had therefore experienced the many social, political, and demographic changes that marked that history. Although the interviews covered many subjects, this paper will focus on three questions: Why did these twenty-four interviewees immigrate to Israel? Over the years, what ties have they had, and do they still have, with the United States? Knowing what they know now about the problems Israel would face and the many ways the country would change, would they immigrate again?

Most of the research about twentieth century American *olim* concentrates on immigrants who arrived after 1967 rather than earlier, probably because immigrants after that time were more numerous and reliable statistical information is more readily available.⁴ Most of this work is sociological, and much of it is quantitative, relying on survey data or on surveys supplemented by interviews. The first comprehensive empirical study was conducted in 1967 by Aaron Antonovsky and David Katz for the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research. In this impressive study, 1,649 former Americans and Canadians were given a structured (“closed”) interview of eighty-five questions about their backgrounds and their adjustment to life in Israel. A few years later, the Israel Central Bureau of Immigrant Absorption tracked a random sample of immigrants, including 167 Americans, who arrived between September 1969 and August 1970 for a period of three years. This was the first of a series of such studies.⁵

Major themes in these and most other studies of American *olim* include the numbers of immigrants and the difficulty of ascertaining those numbers, their characteristics (age, sex, marital status, education, religious affiliation), their motivation for immigration, and their adjustment to Israel. Gerald Engel compared those who stayed with those who returned to the United States.⁶ Others made comparisons between American *olim* and *olim* from other countries or between American *olim* and the American Jewish population as a whole or the Israeli population as a whole. Calvin Goldscheider addressed all of these themes in an article rich in quantitative data.⁷ Other scholars have investigated more specialized topics, such as the role of religion in immigration, American *olim*’s interaction with Israeli bureaucracy, and issues of language.⁸ Kevin Avruch went beyond empirical data to develop a new theory about the “traditionalizing” of American *olim* as they adjusted to Israeli culture and their simultaneous struggle as westerners to “modernize,” or prevent “Levantinization,” of the new state.⁹

While I share other scholars’ interest in the background, motivation, and absorption of American *olim*, the research from which this article is taken is different from earlier work. It is historical rather than sociological, qualitative rather than quantitative, personal rather than impersonal. I have not compared the twenty-five people I interviewed to any other group in the United States

or Israel, nor have I constructed a new theory based on this small population. Rather, I have tried to understand the life stories of twenty-five individuals on their own terms. I wanted to know how the interviewees remembered and interpreted their own experience. While other researchers examined motivation, adjustment, and identity issues at one point in time or over a limited number of years, I looked at these topics within the larger and richer context of nearly the entire span of the interviewees' lives. Unlike researchers who worked within narrower time frames, I was able to ask how it all turned out—how former Americans defined their identities after half of a century in Israel and how they feel now, as mature men and women with children, grandchildren, even great-grandchildren, about the decisions they made when they were young.

Methodology

In 2002 and 2004 I interviewed twenty-five former Americans—fourteen women and eleven men, including six married couples and one pair of brothers—living in Haifa, Tel Aviv, Tivon, Safed, and Jerusalem. Interviewees were volunteers identified through the newsletter of the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel, contacts at the Moriya Synagogue in Haifa, and referrals by friends, colleagues, and other interviewees. I conducted the interviews in the subjects' homes, meeting with husbands and wives separately to preserve the independence of each interview and to allow for the emergence of gender differences. Each interview lasted two to four hours. The interviews were taped and transcribed, and the transcriptions were sent to the interviewees for editing. Many participants supplemented their interviews with family photographs, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, letters, poetry, and in one case an unpublished autobiography. Some provided additional information through telephone calls, letters, e-mails, and second interviews.

I conducted the interviews as what oral historian Ronald Grele called “conversational narratives” rather than as formal question-and-answer sessions. I asked open-ended questions such as “Tell me about your family” or “What were your first impressions of Israel?” or “How has Israel changed during the time you have lived here—for better and for worse?” and followed up on new topics that the interviewees introduced.¹⁰ Rather than adopting a stance of complete detachment, I shared information about my academic and personal background and my connections to Israel—the first of my many visits was in the summer of 1949—when asked or when it seemed appropriate to do so.

Interviewees were generous with their time, their memories, and their reflections. I was impressed by their openness and by the frankness and thoughtfulness with which they addressed all topics. I am aware that memories can fade with time and that what an individual remembers can be influenced by other people's accounts, or by subsequent events, or by the subject's desire to present himself or herself in a particular way. However, their powers of recall seemed

excellent, and they were conscientious in focusing not only on the events of the past but also on how they felt about those events at the time and how they feel about them now. They gave me permission to use their complete names (see endnotes), but in the text I will use first names only.

The Interviewees

While not a statistically representative sample of the American Jewish community, the interviewees were representative of many parts of it. Like the majority of American Jews in the 1940s and 1950s, most of the participants were from urban backgrounds, including New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, Milwaukee, and Atlanta. However, several had spent part or all of their childhoods in small towns in the South and the Midwest. One grew up on an Indian reservation in South Dakota, where she rode a horse every day to a one-room school. The interviewees' religious backgrounds varied from secular to Orthodox, and their Jewish educations ranged over a similarly wide spectrum—from virtually none at all to attendance at Jewish day schools and higher education at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). While a disproportionate number, about one-fourth, attended at least a few years of Jewish day school, most went to public schools; their Jewish education was relegated to Sunday schools and, perhaps, weekday afternoon Hebrew schools. A few came from families with strong Zionist backgrounds—“Dick was born with a blue and white flag in his mouth,” his wife told me—but most did not.¹¹

Everyone had immigrated to Israel from the United States, but, interestingly, five had spent at least a few of their childhood years elsewhere. The children of World War II refugees, Annette (born in Belgium) and Hadassah (born in Cuba) had spent the war years in Cuba and immigrated to the United States in 1946. Joseph Morganstern escaped Poland with his family and arrived in New York by way of Russia in 1941. Genah was born in Palestine and D'vora immigrated to Palestine at the age of two; both returned to the United States when the war broke out. With only a few exceptions the rest were second-generation Americans with at least one and often two foreign-born parents. Although they shared many stories about parents (or grandparents) from Europe, they did not seem to see their *aliyah* (immigration to Israel) as continuing a family tradition of immigration. Only Marcia specifically mentioned (in an unpublished memoir, not in her interview) an immigrant parent as a role model—her mother, who had faced many hardships in coming to Canada and then to the United States as a young teenager: “Perhaps I somehow wished to imitate in some way the challenges she had to surmount,” Marcia wrote.¹²

Many interviewees described comfortable, middle-class backgrounds. Among the more unusual middle-class occupations: Nechama's mother was a drama teacher and producer, Dick's father was a career naval officer, and Naomi told me proudly that her father was the first American-born Orthodox

rabbi in the United States. Among the less affluent, Yitz's father worked for an uncle's wallpaper business, later became a neighborhood grocer, and eventually bought a chicken farm. David's mother boarded young Jews from small towns (mostly girls) whose parents sent them to Atlanta to meet suitable Jewish marriage partners. No one spoke of actual deprivation—there had always been food, shelter, and clothing—but several spoke of their parents not having much money, especially during the Great Depression. David took a commercial course in public high school because there was no money for college: "We were poor, not dirt poor, not scrabbling poor. But money was very important and we all had to work. I did all kinds of work. I sold magazine subscriptions, I delivered newspapers, I sold white linen caps on the street."¹³ The young men of appropriate age served in the military during World War II, as did one of the women, Edythe, much to her parents' dismay.

At the time of the interviews, the participants reflected the diversity of their adopted country. They included the religious (though none was ultra-Orthodox), the secular, entrepreneurs and socialists, right-wing supporters of a "greater Israel," and Peace Now leftists. Many of the men had served in the military. Two of the women, Genah and Haifa (a nickname), were pacifists. More than one-third had lived on kibbutzim although, reflecting the decline of the kibbutz movement, only one was still there at the time of the interview. While all came from Ashkenazi families, many had children or grandchildren married to Israelis of Moroccan, Yemenite, or other Sephardic backgrounds.

The interviewees' activities in Israel were compatible with the idea that American *olim* had an impact disproportionate to their numbers. "Overachievers," most were retired from one, two, or even three jobs or careers pursued simultaneously or consecutively. They had been—and in some cases still were—students, professors, teachers, librarians, secretaries, business people, investment counselors, engineers, psychologists, social workers, journalists, professional fundraisers, administrators of various kinds, homemakers, and volunteers for a wide range of causes. Murray was a publisher and an art dealer; Hadassah headed the department of Document Supply and Inter-Library Loan at the central library of the Technion and instructed women converting to Judaism; Joseph recruited investment capital for Israeli industry; and Susan was a poet and a founding member of the Haifa Committee for Soviet Jewry.

Immigration as a Process

Virtually none of the interviewees could pinpoint a specific time when they made the decision to live in Israel. Rather, they described *aliyah* as a process, a deepening awareness of and attachment to the Jewish state as an idea and a reality that took place over a period of years and, according to several respondents, could have been reversed at various points along the way. In a few cases the process began in early childhood. Nechama, for example, remembered her

passion for Israel, then Palestine, as beginning with her first Hebrew school experiences: “I loved everything Jewish, and I loved everything connected with the Hebrew language and with Palestine and everything,” she told me.¹⁴ Interestingly, Nechama was the only interviewee to mention formal Jewish education as a motivating factor.

Attachment to Israel also began early for Annette, the Belgian-born child of refugee parents, but for her, as for many others, the Zionist message came through informal education, camps, and youth groups rather than religious schools. Zionist clubs and camps expanded greatly in the interwar years, attracting middle-class, American-born youth with cultural programs, conversational Hebrew, folk songs and dances, and charismatic leaders.¹⁵ Almost half of the interviewees reported experiences with these camps and clubs; indeed, they were among the closest to a common influence. Surprisingly, most of the young people who attended these camps and clubs did not come from strong Zionist families, and in many cases their attendance was accidental. For example, Annette’s parents, newcomers to the United States, sent her to a Hebrew-speaking camp because friends told them that Manhattan was no place for a child in the summer and recommended this particular camp. Annette attended for ten summers. She recalled that

It was sponsored by something called the Hebrew Education Committee ... in New York. They tried to get you to speak Hebrew ... It was ... modeled very much after Israel ... and it looked like a kibbutz. I mean, afterwards, when I went for the first time to a kibbutz, I felt at home ... The streets and the bunks and so on were named after cities and towns in Israel. So all the names were familiar to me by the time I came here. You learned *all* the songs... I think I know more of those songs from the forties and fifties than most Israelis do ... The counselors, the dancing and singing and so on, all came from Israel ... And it was very, very intensive and I loved it... I think that was one of the most, one of the strongest things in my background in terms of influencing me and where I went.¹⁷

For nearly half, the process began in late grade school or early adolescence with participation in Zionist youth groups—Young Judea for general Zionists, Bnei Akiva for religious Zionists, Shomer Hatzair for socialist Zionists. David, who became a national officer in Young Judea, joined the Atlanta chapter at the age of twelve because it was the center of Jewish social life for young people in Atlanta; he did not learn until he was already an enthusiastic member that Young Judea was a Zionist organization. David and other interviewees told of spending many hours after school and on weekends in these groups, which became the focus of their social life. Unlike most of the children who joined these groups, interviewees carried their participation into young adulthood, becoming group leaders, assuming organizational and administrative

responsibilities, and attending training farms and other special programs that prepared them for *aliyah*. Several met their spouses through youth group activities. Thus, while the general American Jewish population, including those who identified themselves as Zionists, were not preparing for actual immigration to Israel, these interviewees were part of a small, intensely committed peer group that was. A distinctive mindset and clarity of purpose set them apart from the great majority of American Zionists of all ages who stayed at home: “If we believed in it, then we had to do it. That’s it,” Marcia explained.¹⁸

“We never openly said, ‘We’re going to Palestine. We’re going to live there,’” Carl told me. “It was understood. It was only a matter of time.”¹⁹ Making the decision that the time was right to move to Israel did not end the immigration process. Some participants, including Carl and his wife Nechama, spent months, even years, in further preparation: looking for jobs and housing in the new country, making elaborate lists of what to bring, transporting their children long distances to yeshivot to introduce them to Hebrew and, in some cases, trying to placate parents (even those who were Zionists) and siblings who doubted their sanity.

Finally, interviewees described immigration as a process rather than an event. Many spent time in Israel, or Mandate Palestine, and returned to the United States once and sometimes more than once before making a commitment to remain permanently. Some went as part of summer programs sponsored by their youth groups or by the Student Zionist Organization on their college campuses. Some traveled on their own as students (several under the G.I. Bill), and a few came to do specific, time-bound jobs for the Israeli government or private industry. Joseph’s parents gave him a trip as a graduation present, and Laurie and John came as tourists on their honeymoon.

Why *Aliyah*?

Scholars of immigration speak of “voluntary” and “involuntary” immigration. Clearly, the subjects of this study were voluntary immigrants; they did not have to leave the United States. Scholars also speak of the “push” factors, usually poverty or oppression, that motivate people to leave their homelands and “pull” factors, usually economic and educational opportunities, that attract immigrants to another country. More recently scholars also speak of “chain” migration, people who migrate to a new country because relatives or close friends are already there. In these participants’ narratives, pull factors, the attractions of Israel, were most prominent while push factors, although secondary, also existed in many cases. Chain migration was minor, though not altogether absent. Outside of these very general forces, I have identified, for the purpose of analysis, seven distinct categories of interviewees, based upon their motivation for making *aliyah*: the legacies, the socialists, the religiously motivated, the recruits, the family preservers, the rescuers, and the “accidental tourists.”

These admittedly simplistic categories were not mutually exclusive—many interviewees fit in two or more of these groupings, either simultaneously or at different times in the immigration process.

Legacies. The first category, the people I call legacies, had such strong Zionist backgrounds and family ties to Israel that they seemed on a trajectory toward *aliyah* almost from birth. One such legacy was Shirley, who grew up in Chicago. Shirley's father was a rabbi, her family spoke Hebrew at home—very unusual at the time—and one of her brothers was a founder of Bnei Akiva, a religious Zionist organization in America. Many of Shirley's relatives had moved from Europe to Mandate Palestine in the 1930s and, in the case of one uncle, as early as 1914, and her family remained in close contact with them: "We're Zionists and very strong. That's what we wanted very much.... Our whole life was ... influenced by the relatives in Israel, in Palestine," Shirley told me. After training to be a psychiatric social worker, Shirley immigrated to Israel in 1949: "My uncle, the one who arrived in 1914, was one of the founders of the city of Ramat Gan ... and I have a brother who served in the 1948 army ... I came straight to them," she told me.²⁰

Shirley was clearly pulled to Israel by her Zionist ideology. However, because of her strong desire to join family members already in Israel, she could be considered not only as a legacy but also as an example of chain migration. Chain migration also played a role in the lives of several other interviewees, where they influenced a sibling, or were influenced by a sibling, toward *aliyah*. In at least one family, parents followed their children and grandchildren to Israel.

Socialists. A second category were the socialists, people attracted to Israel primarily by what they saw as the opportunity to build a secular social and economic utopia—an egalitarian society—in the new Jewish state. Haifa came for this reason: "In the early days my socialist side was much stronger than my Zionist side," she told me. Like many of the interviewees, Haifa came to Israel by way of a Zionist youth group, the socialist Shomer Hatzair, which she and her sister had originally joined for social rather than ideological reasons. "Our girlfriends were part of the group," she remembered. She stayed because of the camaraderie, the quality of the leaders, and the stimulating intellectual and cultural content:

We had a lot of discussions, which I enjoyed very much. About Zionism. About the political situation in the country ... We had wonderful people working with us who were a little older than us.... We were thirteen, so they may have been sixteen, seventeen.... There was a couple from Israel.... In school you had reading and writing and arithmetic. But here we were educated through music and dance and theatre.... So it was a broadening of our intellectual and social world.

Coming from a working-class family, Haifa was attracted to the group's socialist ideals; indeed, socialism was more important than Zionism for Haifa not only as a young woman but probably throughout her life. After a very positive experience at a Shomer Hatzair training farm in New Jersey, where she immediately took to the collective lifestyle, Haifa immigrated with her husband Yitz, also from Shomer Hatzair, to Kibbutz Sasa in the Galilee.²¹

Religiously Motivated. Religion motivated more interviewees than socialism, including another married couple, Hadassah and Moshe. Hadassah and Moshe were an observant couple to whom traditional Judaism was very important, both in their decision to move to Israel and throughout their lives. They met in Bnei Akiva, a religious Zionist youth group, attracted to each other at least in part by their common goal of *aliyah*. Marriage to someone who shared this goal was especially important to Hadassah because while Moshe could, and did, travel to Israel alone as a student, Hadassah, as a religious girl, could not. (Even for nonreligious girls in the conventional 1950s independent travel could be problematic.) Hadassah was one of several respondents who made a decision not to date, much less marry, a man who did not share her desire to live in Israel.

Both Hadassah and Moshe believed that a religious Jew should take seriously the *mitzvah* to live in the Holy Land if possible, and both saw *aliyah* as “an opportunity to take part in where Judaism is really leading to.” They remembered believing when they immigrated, and at the time of the interview they believed even more firmly, that “this is where Judaism is taking place, it’s developing, here in this country, and not what’s going on in the United States or Australia or any place else.” As young parents, they believed in the importance of bringing up Jewish children in a religious and cultural environment, a country of hanukkahs, not Christmas trees. The Jewish state was their answer to religious assimilation: “Because this is ours and there, you know, out of Israel, is not ours,” Moshe explained.²²

Recruit and Family Preserver. Dick was a “recruit,” persuaded to come to Israel by representatives of the Israeli government. A naval officer in World War II, Dick survived a kamikaze attack in Okinawa that gutted his ship. Believing that “God let me live not just for me anymore. I have to do something beyond this,” he became an active Zionist after the war, a member of the *Haganah* underground in the United States.²³ Zionism was not new to him, but his postwar level of activity was. While he was working with the *Haganah* raising money for illegal weapons and interviewing prospective pilots, Dick was asked by Teddy Kollek, later mayor of Jerusalem, to come to the fledgling state for a year to help build its navy. Dick described his conversation with Kollek:

I said, "Come on, now. I was a junior officer.... There were thousands of guys like me." He said, "Well, let me ask you a question. If we take all the people in the navy, all the officers, and of them take the number who were communications, electronic warfare specialists like you were, is that a small number?" "Yeah, that's a small number." "Take the number who had the amount of combat experience that you had. Is that still a small number? Take the number of those who were Jews, and of the number that were Jews, take the number that were Zionists, and of the number who were Zionists, take the number who speak Hebrew"—because I know Hebrew fairly well ... "And of those who speak Hebrew, how many will go if we ask them? It's you! We know you're not the greatest guy for this. We have no one else." So I said okay.²⁴

Dick agreed to go not only because he succumbed to Kollek's persuasiveness but also because of his belief that God had saved his life for a purpose. Dick was a recruit, but his motivation was also religious.

Susan, Dick's wife, went to Israel with him. Her family was vehemently opposed to her going. In fact, her father was a founding member of the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism. Susan, who described herself as "religiously deprived," knew little about Judaism or Zionism. "I didn't even know where Israel was," she told me. "I had *no* feeling of connection." Pregnant (although she did not know it yet) and already the mother of two little girls when she and Dick moved, Susan was motivated by what she perceived as a need to preserve the quality of her marriage. She went to Israel because she loved her husband and knew how important this was to him. She remembered thinking at the time, "It's something he wants to do, and it may come between us if I don't go."²⁵

Susan and Dick were excellent examples of immigrants who experienced *aliyah* as a process rather than a single event. Dick had been recruited for an assignment of only one year, but in fact the couple stayed for seven years before returning to the United States. Each gave a different reason for the return. Susan, who, interestingly, had been the more reluctant of the two to leave Israel, told me she returned to the United States to be with her family because her father was very ill. Dick attributed the decision to the demands of his business career: "We felt we'd never come back [to Israel]. We'd done our bit for the homeland," he told me. Yet they did come back, eleven years later, this time to stay. Susan's second and permanent *aliyah*, unlike her first, was the culmination of her own ideological and religious journey. Back in the United States, she had maintained her ties to Israel through her Israeli friends and through activism in Hadassah, but most importantly, through her deepening ties to traditional Judaism. She spoke of her feelings while attending synagogue in the United States: "The words are there, the longing for Jerusalem, the Promised Land, all that.... [H]ow could I be saying those words if I didn't mean them?... *That's*

when I became a Zionist, not while I lived here [in Israel].” No longer a “family preserver,” Susan immigrated as a religious Zionist by the time she and Dick returned to Israel.²⁶

Rescuers. While the Holocaust hovered in the background of virtually every interviewee’s decision to immigrate—especially those who came of age in the late 1940s and early 1950s—it was in the foreground for this group of participants. The rescuers’ immediate concern was the welfare of the homeless Jewish refugees from Europe.

Murray was a rescuer. His relationship with Israel grew out of his love for the Jewish people and, more specifically, out of concern for the Holocaust survivors. While Murray described his home as “very, very Jewish,” he did not remember speaking of Zionism while growing up. He did remember that “the Jews of Europe were very much a topic” and that his mother had struggled in vain to save her family members by bringing them to the United States. Instead of going to college after World War II, Murray acted on his conviction that Jews languishing in displaced person camps in Europe needed a home and that, since neither Europe nor the United States wanted them, they had to go to Palestine.

A U.S. Merchant Marine during World War II, Murray joined a group of volunteers working with the *Haganah*. They picked up an old ship, a former icebreaker called *Tradewinds*, in Miami, refitted it in Lisbon, and filled it with Jewish refugees who came on board in rubber rafts under cover of darkness in secluded spots on the Italian Riviera. Murray learned about Zionism from the refugees and their *Haganah* escorts on the ship: “You learn fast,” he told me. The ship, by now renamed *Hatikvah* (*The Hope*), was intercepted by a British destroyer, and Murray was imprisoned first in Cyprus and then in Athlit (a British camp near Haifa) before finally being released.²⁷ The fact that his activity was illegal did not bother him: “It was a just cause and the Jews, survivors of the Holocaust, were coming to a home,” he said. Back in the United States, he found himself on the Jewish lecture circuit: “Marvelous! I was a hero,” he said.²⁸ But the Jewish homeland was on his mind, and so the rescuer, now a Zionist, returned to Israel as an immigrant in 1949.

“Accidental Tourists.” Finally, there were two interviewees I call the “accidental tourists,” John and Laurie, who became Israelis almost by chance. Neither was the product of a Zionist upbringing, youth group, or camp, and neither was a recruit or a rescuer. John had had no religious education, no bar mitzvah, virtually no contact with Judaism at all until, influenced by a friend from college, he read Leon Uris’s bestseller *Exodus* and Abraham Sachar’s *A History of the Jews in the Modern World*. Already in Europe on their honeymoon, John

and Laurie went to Israel as tourists in 1959 because John thought it would be interesting to see the country.

“I hated it from the minute I saw it,” Laurie remembered. “It was so primitive. The food was awful. The accommodations were awful... It was always hot and dusty and full of flies.” Although she was moved in Jerusalem “by the thread of [Jewish] history going through the years,” her main impression was that Israel was “just a lot of rocks.”²⁹ John’s reaction could not have been more different: “I liked the country very much the week that we traveled around in 1959. It’s exciting,” he remembered. The couple returned to Israel in 1962 for John to take a two-year job contract and then stayed permanently because he found living there an adventure and a challenge:

Had I been raised in the States in the 1800s I would have gone West. I wanted to do something exciting. I mean, I got interested in Zionism, of course, but I wanted to do something different before I settled down, to do something off the beaten path... And that was basically the initial motivation. Little by little, you know, I ended up staying.³⁰

Laurie, who had accompanied John reluctantly for what she originally thought would be only two years, wanted to go home. She stayed, however, for the same reason Susan decided to accompany Dick on his naval assignment: she wanted to preserve her family. Divorce seemed her only alternative. As the conditions of her life there improved over the years, Laurie, too, came to feel that Israel was home.

Ethnic and Personal Goals

Some motivations were widely shared among this study’s participants, cutting across the seven categories. One of these was ethnic motivation—identification with and love of the Jewish people. Regardless of their religious or political ideology and whether or not they were active “rescuers,” many interviewees spoke of the impact of the Holocaust and, consequently, of their desire to help build a safe refuge for Jews, a place where Jews could control their own destiny. This road to Zionism seemed especially common among the older *olim*, those who would have been most aware of the Holocaust when it was happening or soon after. Many of the younger interviewees simply had such a strong love for and identification with the Jewish people that it led them toward the Jewish homeland.

Personal motivations, too, were widely shared and for some, equally powerful. Several interviewees came to Israel not in spite of the difficulties of living there, but because of them. As young adults leaving the parental home, they were drawn to *aliyah* as a challenge, a road to adulthood. This was especially true for several of the women, who saw Israel as providing space for personal growth away from the restrictive class and gender expectations they had grown

up with. Another, even more widespread personal motivation was that people wanted to do something important with their lives, something that would make their lives count. Many interviewees, women and men, told me they saw the United States as large and already developed, but Israel was small and young. They believed that in Israel their contributions—indeed, their lives—would make a difference.

The “Push” Factor

Although all of the interviewees emphasized the attraction of Israel, the “pull” of the new country, a few also spoke about “push” factors, personal and social conditions in the United States that contributed to their decision to emigrate. Susan’s interview suggested that many of these subjects (and perhaps subjects of other studies as well) may have underreported push factors. Susan told of sitting with “Anglo Saxon” (English-speaking) friends in Israel: “We were all talking about why we had come.... [I]t was the idealism, but there was also some sort of dissatisfaction with the way things were where we were from. For instance, my father and Dick.” For Susan and Dick, and perhaps for others as well, family issues were a push factor. Susan’s father and Dick did not get along, and Dick hated working in his father-in-law’s real estate business: “And then he was asked to come as an advisor to the Israeli Navy. It was an out in a way. In addition to being an ideal.... So it’s running to [Israel], but it was also a bit of running away,” she explained. Going to Israel was “a bit of running away” for Susan as well:

My mother used to call me up when I was a young married woman in Philadelphia and tell me what to do.... And then Dick would say, ‘That’s ridiculous,’ not to do that. I didn’t know who to obey, my mother or my husband. And when I got there [to Israel] I thought, ‘Hey, I don’t have to obey anybody.’³¹

Class hierarchies helped push socialist Haifa out of the United States and toward Shomer Hatzair’s promise of an egalitarian Jewish homeland:

I felt quite strongly about equality for all because in our family we were the lower rung of the financial, economic level of the ladder and I felt it very much.... I had a wonderful dad who worked so hard. Why was he not as good as the other people, even though we didn’t have money and he couldn’t make it? I didn’t see the correctness in that. So this was for me a perfect fitting.

Shomer Hatzair held out the ideal of gender equality as well as social class equality, and this too resonated with Haifa’s experience, suggesting yet another push factor: “My brothers never had to do anything, and the girls (that’s my sister and I) would help in the house. That was the place of the woman, right? But the boys didn’t have to, and that irked me very much.”³²

Murray Greenfield and fellow crew members from the ship Hatikvah that smuggled illegal Jewish immigrants into Palestine. Here he is in Cyprus, where he was imprisoned after the British captured the ship in 1947.



Left to right:
David and Frieda Macarov with Varda, the first child born in the Israel Airforce camp, "Ariel," in Jaffe, 1947.



David Macarov as a student at the Hebrew University in 1948.



David Macarov on guard duty for the Haganah in Jerusalem, 1948.



(All photos courtesy Maxine S. Seller)



Yitz Schechter at a Shomer Hatzair training farm in Hightstown, NJ, 1946.



Yitz and Haifa Schechter with Yael, September 1949. Born in July, Yael was the first baby born in Sasa.



Yitz and Haifa build a snowman in Sasa, 1950.



Yitz, Danny, Haifa, Riva, and Yael in Sasa, 1958–1959.



Edith Geiger, founder of the English language library at Safed, at work. Photo undated.

Disillusionment with the dishonesty he encountered as he entered the American business world helped push David toward the new Jewish homeland, which he saw at the time of his *aliyah* as more idealistic and less focused on material gain than the United States:

I've had experiences in American business that disgusted me. I worked for a chain of shoe stores when I was out of high school and the office manager became ill and I took his place. . . . And in the course of my taking the place of the sick office manager, I learned that this company was stealing right and left in its income tax. . . . As I became bookkeeper, I began to realize that the money from sales and the money deposited were different. This was called creaming. They would cream the money off and divide it among family members. And then they would give me lectures on how one has to keep one's nose to the grindstone and not waste time in Young Judea. . . . And that happened on three different jobs, different ways.³³

Interestingly, very few of the interviewees mentioned alienation or anti-Semitism as push factors. Hadassah was virtually the only one who spoke of alienation from the United States: "I never really felt that I was an American. I felt my Jewishness more than I felt my Americanism," she told me. Hadassah attributed her sense of alienation to the fact that her parents were refugees (although other children of refugees did not feel this way or did not say so if they did), that she was born in Cuba, and that she had a very strong religious upbringing and education. Anti-Semitism was another push factor for her: "I had a piano teacher who lived in a closed-off section with a guard with a sign that said, 'No dogs and no Jews,'" she told me. "I had to pass the guard every time I went for a lesson, and he was very nasty."³⁴ Given the years in which they lived in the United States and the fact that most grew up in immigrant households, I found it surprising that personal experiences with alienation and anti-Semitism were not mentioned more often. Perhaps time had softened unpleasant memories. Or perhaps for interviewees brought up in the shadow of the Holocaust and living for decades with terrorism in Israel, the social and economic anti-Semitism of post-World War II America did not seem very significant. Also, many interviewees grew up in close-knit, mostly Jewish communities, where they would have been insulated from some aspects of anti-Semitism.

Ties to the United States

Unlike refugees from poverty or oppression, these "voluntary" immigrants spoke very positively of the United States and over the years maintained many personal and cultural ties to the country in which they had grown up. Almost everyone kept his or her American passport (which I was told made travel to other countries as well as the United States easier). More important, almost everyone maintained close contact by mail, e-mail, telephone, and personal visits with family, friends, and colleagues in the United States, including, in

many cases, children and grandchildren living there temporarily or permanently. John and Laurie spent every summer and every sabbatical in the United States (an arrangement that had helped reconcile her to remaining in Israel). Other academics, too, made frequent trips there for conferences and sabbaticals (aided by Israeli universities' generous travel allowances) or to pursue graduate or professional training. Several traveled regularly to the United States as fundraisers or public relations officers for Israeli institutions. Carl and his wife Nechama traveled to the United States often and kept in touch with many people there because Carl wrote a widely syndicated column in American Jewish newspapers about life in Israel.

Although everyone spoke serviceable Hebrew, English remained important in many of the interviewees' lives and helped link them and their children to the United States. Participants told me that they made sure their Israeli-born children knew English for two reasons—because it would enable them to communicate with family in the United States and because it was widely used in business and educational circles in Israel and throughout the world. Edythe created and maintained an impressive English-language library in Safed that fostered knowledge of English for individuals and schools throughout the Galilee; and at the time of the interviews, Ben Zion (“Butch”) was teaching his grandchildren English.

Although fluent enough to meet the needs of daily life, a few were never totally comfortable in Hebrew, especially if they spent a lot of time outside of Israel or used English regularly in their work. After many decades in Israel, Butch was finally secure enough in his Israeli identity to relax with the English-language daily *The Jerusalem Post*. Susan, who had spent eleven years in the United States between her first and her second immigration and who wrote poetry in English, understood her Hebrew-speaking friends but answered them in English: “It’s easier that way.... It’s not just the language,” she continued. “It’s jokes. It’s a [long pause] background that I don’t have in common with them.... It doesn’t trouble me.... I have enough friends, and I’m busy, and my life is in English.”³⁵

Many interviewees spoke of lifelong cultural, psychological, as well as linguistic connections to their American background. While they had friends among Israelis, both native and foreign-born, many interviewees felt a special affinity with other “Anglo-Saxons,” the Israeli term for all English speakers, whether from the United States, Canada, England, South Africa, or elsewhere. For example, when Naomi was a student at the Hebrew University in 1949, she helped organize *ha-hug ha-Anglosaksi* (the Anglo-Saxon group.) Naomi remembered the young people in the group as more “western,” the interaction between the boys and girls freer: “We didn’t misbehave, but we weren’t self-conscious in the same way,” she explained. “Also, I think we were perhaps more intellectual.... But I think it was mainly sociological.... A lot of couples came

out of that group.”³⁶ Many decades later, at the time of the interviews, some of these affinities apparently still survived. Haifa noted that “Anglo-Saxons really stick together” to maintain not only English but also their shared approach to culture and education: “They’re different from, say, Israeli Israelis.... Here in Tivon I have a group of friends who are all Anglo-Saxon.”³⁷

Links to the United States were political and psychological as well. As mentioned earlier, virtually everyone kept his or her American passport. Although many assured me that this was a matter of convenience (for travel, rather than identity), several noted that the American citizenship represented by the passport set them apart. Unlike most other foreign-born Israelis, they had the option of returning to their former homes. Several also told me that American ideas helped shape their political views in Israel. When she first arrived, Naomi was appalled by the politicization of almost every aspect of Israeli life:

To the eyes of an American, the almost complete politicization of everything from housing to jobs to education ... was wrong.... To use government money in order to further political aims in such a blatant, straightforward way was something I found shocking.³⁸

Several interviewees criticized the Israeli electoral system, where parties rather than localities were represented in the Knesset because of their knowledge of the very different, and to their mind better, American system. Similarly, several expressed discomfort with the close relationship between the rabbinate and the government in Israel, a discomfort they attributed, at least in part, to the separation of religion and state that they experienced in America. Haifa attributed her concern about the treatment of Israeli Arabs to her American origins. “I’m an American. It’s different, it really is, the way we look at things.”³⁹ American religious as well as political views were a continuing influence. Some interviewees from Conservative or Reform backgrounds were initially so uncomfortable with Israeli synagogues (all of which were Orthodox when they arrived) that they established their own synagogues with mixed seating and prayerbooks imported from the United States.

Finally, interviewees indicated another set of continuing American influences: impatience with bureaucracy and authority and an eagerness to innovate. In her first year at Kibbutz Sasa, Haifa, then a new mother, successfully challenged the authoritative European pediatrician over how babies should be fed; when the physician ordered cornstarch and water, she and other young Americans at Sasa insisted on milk. Haifa also initiated more time for parents to be with their children during the day, a practice that spread from the mainly American Sasa to other kibbutzim. Another example is Murray, who wrote a book to help prospective immigrants navigate the bureaucracy of the Jewish Agency and launched a number of economic projects, despite difficulties from the government:

I raised money for mortgage funds, loan funds, all kinds of things like this and I always fought the government. . . . We [Americans] are too difficult. . . . You see, when you get poor people . . . you give them something and they're happy. And the people that are not poor, and they've got education, and they've got backgrounds, they want more. Or they want different. And these demands they [government officials] can't understand. 'What do you mean . . . you want to change this, you want to change that.' Americans always want to change everything. You know, we've got a background of democracy and freedom . . . and how to vote for people. We've got all these things and it's built into you, and you want to bring it with you here. . . . There's no question about it . . . Americans, just by being here, even when not doing anything, have a certain positive influence. And, of course, if they're active—⁴⁰

Would They Do It Again?

While the interviewees expressed great pride in Israel's cultural and scientific achievements and in its population growth, especially the "ingathering" of Jews from Morocco, Ethiopia, Russia, and elsewhere, they felt as free as every other Israeli to criticize their adopted country. Some who had immigrated to live on kibbutzim regretted the decline of the collective ethos and the rise of capitalism with its emphasis on competition and individual gain. Some expressed concern that in recent years uncritical "Americanization" was changing Israeli life and culture for the worse, that politicians were corrupt and self-serving, and that young people were not as patriotic or idealistic as their generation had been—although a few, not taking themselves too seriously, attributed their concerns about the young to their own advancing age. Whether on the political right or left, almost everyone agreed that Israeli Arabs were not treated equally, and everyone agonized over the continuing violence with the Palestinians: "Sometimes I wonder if we did a good thing for our children, bringing them here; peace seems so far away. I say to myself, 'things will get better,' but who knows? Back then, who knew?" said Laurie.⁴¹

Despite their recognition of these and other problems in Israel, only one interviewee, Yitz, even suggested that he might be able to live elsewhere. Yitz told me sadly that he had come to Israel to build "a secure home" for the Jews, but that now the rise of radical Islam had made this problematic.⁴² Despite continuing close and warm ties to the United States, participants at the time of the interviews identified themselves as Israelis—not expatriates, not Anglo-Saxon (despite their acknowledgement of continuing American influences), not any other kind of hyphenated Israeli. Carl, who had immigrated at an older age than most and who had spent a great deal of time in the United States as a representative of the Technion and later as a newspaper columnist, told me that he felt himself to be simultaneously an American and an Israeli. Carl's perception of double identity was exceptional, however; virtually all of the other interviewees saw

themselves as unambiguously Israeli: “I feel I’m Israeli. I mean I am Israeli.... I still love the United States, I think it’s a wonderful place... a great country... but Israel is home,” said John, expressing the view heard again and again. Several commented that American friends and relatives no longer understood them (or vice versa) and that they found life in America less interesting than life in Israel, people in America less interesting than people in Israel.

After so many years, the interviewees’ ties to Israel were strong, and their roots in Israel were deep. Most had established close and large families, including children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. They lived close enough to see them frequently—even secular families gathered for Friday night dinners—and were deeply involved in their activities. Also, having arrived early enough to “get in on the ground floor,” many had enjoyed long and successful careers. “We live pretty well,” said Dick, whose penthouse apartment provided a spectacular view of Haifa harbor. “Yeah, I know all the problems. But when I go back to the States, I’m aware of the problems there, too.”⁴³

At the time of most of the interviews (2002), the intifada was raging, suicide bombers were a constant menace, the economy was in serious recession, and the country was under diplomatic pressure from former friends as well as longtime enemies. Yet, despite the fact that their American passports could grant them permanent return to the United States, the interviewees chose to stay. Their narratives suggest that they remained due to a kind of positive “inertia”—Israel was home now—and because most of their family members were now Israelis. The narratives also suggest that they stayed because they wanted to. Explicitly or implicitly, most told me that they were content, more than content, with the lives they had made for themselves in Israel. With the exceptions of the still committed and therefore disappointed socialists and the few whose career goals had been frustrated by lack of Hebrew language skills or other immigration-associated problems, most seem to have found what they had been looking for. They had fulfilled both personal and ethnic goals in coming to Israel. Susan had found an opportunity for personal growth: “You know, there are few things that one can be proud of in one’s life, and so this was one of the things that I’m proud of. First of all that I came. And that I realized how important this was to Dick.”⁴⁴ Susan was proud, too, that she had been able to overcome physical hardships and that she had learned to communicate and to make friends in a new place. Moshe and Hadassah, who came for religious reasons, had become part of a close-knit religious and social community, a community that they helped to create and maintain. They were proud that their four children were also religious and that their sons not only studied in yeshivot but also served in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Crossing the Suez Canal in a rubber boat during the Yom Kippur War and working at the cutting edge of scientific research, John had found the adventure he had been looking for.

Many interviewees expressed satisfaction at the part they had played, large or small, in building the Jewish homeland. They told me that being in Israel had given meaning to their lives: “It’s been a wonderful, wonderful experience. Something out of this world,” said Helen.⁴⁵ As Dick put it, “We love it here! This is ours. This is where we belong, where we feel whole, where we feel complete. I wouldn’t think about going back.”⁴⁶ John, the “accidental tourist,” addressed my final question about whether, knowing what he knew now, he would settle in Israel again. His reply:

Oh, absolutely. I’ve had a great life. Lots of good friends here ... I’m sure that if we had stayed in the States we would be very comfortable. But I doubt that I would have had the same feeling of being part of such an adventure as the rebirth of the Jewish homeland. It’s been a privilege to live in such a place in such a monumental time in the history of our people.⁴⁷

David had come to Israel to live on a kibbutz and to escape American materialism. Neither objective worked out as he had expected. He left the kibbutz, saw the socialist ethos replaced by capitalism over the years, and at the time of the interview was demonstrating with Peace Now against the government’s policies on the West Bank. Yet David, too, assured me that, knowing what he knows now, he would immigrate again: “If I’ve done anything useful in the world it was coming to Palestine ... [W]hat I’ve done—it was for this that I was born.”⁴⁸

Conclusion

It cannot be assumed that these twenty-five former Americans who had successfully settled in Israel and volunteered to tell me about their lives were typical of all early American *olim*. Indeed, the diversity of their stories suggests that there was no “typical” immigrant. Although many of the interviewees came to Israel as Zionists (defined in different ways, arrived at from different starting points), some did not. All were motivated by a mix of personal, ideological, and ethnic factors that varied from person to person and that could, and did, sometimes change over time. They did not stay because they were ideologues. They stayed because over the years Israel had become home, because their children and grandchildren were there, and because they found life there interesting, meaningful, and individually validating.

Although they identified themselves as Israelis rather than as Americans, many of the interviewees recognized that their continuing personal, intellectual, cultural, and emotional ties to the United States gave them identifiable (though not necessarily unique) perspectives on Israeli political, religious, and social life. While I did not raise the question, my impression from the interviews was that the converse was also probably true—that half a century or more of immersion in Israeli life and culture gave them unique perspectives on Jewish (and non-Jewish) issues and events in the United States. Further research should be

undertaken on the role of American *olim* as living bridges—two-way transmitters of ideas, information, and concern between Israel and the United States.

Maxine S. Seller is professor emerita in the Department of Educational Administration and Policy and adjunct professor emerita in the Department of History at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Past president of the History of Education Society, she has published extensively in immigration history, Jewish history, and the history of education.

Notes

¹This study was funded in part by the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation. I would like to thank the Littauer Foundation for its support. I would also like to thank the interviewees for their time, their hospitality, and their willingness to share their life stories with me.

²For a discussion of the difficulty of ascertaining the numbers of early *olim*, see Harold R. Isaacs, *American Jews in Israel* (New York: The John Day Company, 1967), 42–53. Isaacs suggests that net American immigration to Israel up to 1966 was about ten thousand or less than 0.2 of 1 percent (19). See also Kevin Avruch, *American Immigrants in Israel: Social Identities and Change* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 35–36. Avruch estimates that American immigration was about 0.4 percent of total immigration to Israel in 1950. For Israeli government statistics, see *Immigration to Israel, 1948–1972*, special series 416, part 1 (Jerusalem: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 1974), table 4, 23–25, as cited in Avruch, *American Immigrants*, 37.

³Chaim Waxman, *American Aliyah: Portrait of an Innovative Migration Movement* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 84, 85, 87, and Calvin Goldscheider, “American Aliyah: Sociological and Demographic Perspectives,” in *The Jew in American Society*, ed. Marshall Sklare (New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1974), 367–374. Goldscheider provides statistical comparisons on educational and occupational status between American *olim*, *olim* from other countries, and the Jewish population of Israel showing that American *olim* had the highest percentage of professionals. For Israeli recognition and appreciation of the impact of American *olim*, see Herb Keinon, “An Accent on Action,” Magazine edition of *The Jerusalem Post*, (January, 2000): 14; Elli Wohlgelelnter, “American immigrants said to have more impact than other Western Olim,” *The Jerusalem Post* (May 10, 2001): News section 5, and Zipporah Porath, “They made a difference,” Independence Day Supplement edition of *The Jerusalem Post* (April 25, 2001): Features 20.

⁴For background on American settlers in Mandate Palestine, see Joseph B. Glass, *From New Zion to Old Zion: American Jewish Immigration and Settlement in Palestine 1917–1939* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002). Published works about American immigration to Israel include Isaacs, *American Jews in Israel*; P.E. Lapide, *A Century of U.S. Aliyah* (Jerusalem: The Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel, 1961); Aaron Antonovsky and David Katz, *Americans and Canadians in Israel* reports 1 and 2 (Jerusalem: Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, 1969); Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, “Immigrants Arrived in 1969/70: Their First Three Years,” (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1975); Aaron Antonovsky and David Katz, *From the Golden to the Promised Land* (Darby, Pennsylvania: Norwood Editions, 1979); Avruch, *American Immigrants in Israel*; Robert Silverberg, *If I Forget Thee O Jerusalem: American Jews and the State of Israel* (New York: Morrow, 1970); and Waxman, *American Aliyah*. Liel Leibovitz’s *Aliyah: Three Generations of American-Jewish Immigration to Israel* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2006) tells the story of three families, including one that immigrated in 1947. For a bibliography of books and periodical literature see Shoshana Kaufman, *American Jews in Israel: A Selected Annotated Bibliography 1949–1985* (New York: American Jewish Committee Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations, 1985).

⁵Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, "Immigrants [Who] Arrived in 1969/70: Their First Three Years in Israel" (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1975).

⁶Gerald Engel, "Comparison Between Americans Living in Israel and Those Who Returned to America," *Journal of Psychology* 74 (January, 1970): 195–205 and 74 (July 1970): 243–251. It was published in two separate installments.

⁷Goldscheider, "American Aliya," 335–384. See also Gerald Engel, "North American Settlers in Israel," *American Jewish Year Book* (1970): 161–187.

⁸Arnold Dashefsky and Bernard Lazerwitz, "The Role of Religious Identification in North American Migration to Israel," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 22, n. 3 (1983): 263–275; David Katz and Aaron Antonovsky, "Bureaucracy and Immigrant Adjustment," *International Migration Review* 7 (Fall, 1973): 247–256; and Elizabeth Nadel, Joshua Fishman, and R. Cooper, "English in Israel: A Sociolinguistic Study," *Anthropological Linguistics* 19 (January, 1977): 26–53.

⁹Avruch, *American Immigrants in Israel*, "Aliya and Change: Traditionalizing" (chapter 6) and "Aliya and Change: Modernizing," (chapter 7): 123–198.

¹⁰Ronald J. Grele, "Movement Without Aim: Methodological and Theoretical Problems in Oral History," in *Envelopes of Sound*, ed. Ronald J. Grele (Chicago: Precedent Publishers, 1985), passim.

¹¹Interview with Susan Rosenberg, Haifa, 20 October 2002.

¹²Marcia Resnick, *Family: Memoirs, Images, Memoir*, Unpublished manuscript (shared by Marcia Resnick with the author,) 1996, 28.

¹³Interview with David Macarov, Jerusalem, 15 November 2004.

¹⁴Interview with Nechama Alpert, Haifa, 10 November 2002.

¹⁵On the growth of Zionist youth movements, see Mark A. Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism* (New York and London: NYU Press, 1998), 140–147.

¹⁶Emphasis of the interviewees unless otherwise specified.

¹⁷Interview with Annette Cohen, Haifa, 29 September 2002.

¹⁸Interview with Marcia Resnick, Haifa, 16 October 2002.

¹⁹Interview with Carl Alpert, Haifa, 20 September 2002.

²⁰Interview with Shirley Meisel, Kiryat Bialik, Haifa, 3 November 2002.

²¹Interview with Haifa Schechter, Tivon, Israel, 16 October 2002.

²²Interview with Moshe Goldberg, Haifa, 17 October 2002.

²³Interview with Richard Rosenberg, Haifa, 14 October 2002.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Interview with Susan Rosenberg, Haifa, 20 October 2002.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷For a dramatic account of this and other ships on similar missions, see Joseph M. Hochstein and Murray S. Greenfield, *The Jews' Secret Fleet: The Untold Story of North American Volunteers Who Smashed the British Blockade* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen Publishing House, 1987).

²⁸Interview with Murray Greenfield, Tel Aviv, 13 November 2002.

²⁹Interview with Laurie Wolberg, Haifa, 5 November 2002.

³⁰Interview with John Wolberg, Haifa, 4 November 2002.

³¹Interview with Susan Rosenberg, Haifa, 20 October 2002.

³²Interview with Haifa Schechter, Tivon, Israel, 6 October 2002.

³³Interview with David Macarov, Jerusalem, 15 November 2004.

- ³⁴Interview with Hadassah Goldberg, Haifa, 9 October 2002.
- ³⁵Interview with Susan Rosenberg, Haifa, 20 October 2002.
- ³⁶Interview with Naomi Cohen, Haifa, 2 November 2002.
- ³⁷Interview with Haifa Schechter, Tivon, Israel, 6 October 2002.
- ³⁸Interview with Naomi Cohen, Haifa, 2 November 2002.
- ³⁹Interview with Haifa Schechter, Tivon, Israel, 16 October 2002.
- ⁴⁰Interview with Murray Greenfield, Tel Aviv, 13 November 2002.
- ⁴¹Interview with Laurie Wolberg, Haifa, 5 November 2002.
- ⁴²Interview with Yitz Schechter, Tivon, Israel, 6 October 2002.
- ⁴³Interview with Richard Rosenberg, Haifa, 13 October 2002.
- ⁴⁴Interview with Susan Rosenberg, Haifa, 20 October 2002.
- ⁴⁵Interview with Helen Golan, Haifa, 17 October 2002.
- ⁴⁶Interview with Richard Rosenberg, Haifa, 6 November 2002.
- ⁴⁷Interview with John Wolberg, Haifa, 4 November 2002.
- ⁴⁸Interview with David Macarov, Jerusalem, 15 November 2004.

If Americans Knew is dedicated to providing Americans with everything they need to know about Israel and Palestine.Â Contents:
Introduction Early History of the Region The British Mandate Period: 1920-1948 The UN Partition of Palestine Statehood and Expulsion
- 1948 The 1967 War and Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza [1973 War (Known in Israel as the Yom Kippur War) -
Addendum by If Americans Knew] The History of Terrorism in the Region Jewish Criticism of Zionism Zionism and the.Â The Arab
community, as it became increasingly aware of the Zionistsâ€™ intentions, strenuously opposed further Jewish immigration and land
buying because it posed a real and imminent danger to the very existence of Arab society in Palestine. Early statehood (1948â€“1950).
After Aliyah Bet, the process of numbering or naming individual aliyot ceased, but immigration did not. A major wave of immigration of
over half a million Jews went to Israel between 1948 and 1950, many fleeing renewed persecution in Eastern Europe, and increasingly
hostile Arab countries. This period of immigration is often termed kibbutz galuyot (literally, ingathering of exiles), due to the large number
of Jewish diaspora communities that made aliyah.Â Nefesh Bâ€™Nefesh works in cooperation with the Jewish Agency and the Israeli
Government in increasing the numbers of North American and UK olim. Many immigrants began arriving in Israel after the First and
Second Intifada, with a total of 3,052 arriving in 2005 â€™ the highest number since 1983. Palestinian Arabs refused to recognise Israel
and it became the turn of the Israeli government itself to suffer from terrorist attacks when fedayeen (fanatics) from the Palestinian Arabs
community attacked Israel. Such attacks later became more organised with the creation of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation
(PLO). To the Palestinian Arabs, the area the Jews call Israel, will always be Palestine. To the Jews it is Israel. There have been very
few years of peace in the region since 1948.