

Fundamentalism, Terrorism, and Democracy: The Case of the Gush Emunim Underground

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Introduction

This study is part of a larger attempt to understand and explain the radicalization processes that have taken place within democratic societies in the last twenty-five years and that led non-violent political movements to embark upon a violent course that finally produced terrorism. The study emerged from a specific interest in the radicalization of Gush Emunim (the block of the faithful), an Israeli messianic movement committed to establishing Jewish settlements in the West Bank (biblical Judea and Samaria). It was especially triggered by the exposure and arrest, in April 1984, of a terror group composed of highly-respected members of the movement, who since 1980 had committed several stunning acts of anti-Arab terror in the West Bank. The fact that the "underground"—as it was named in the press—had also developed a very elaborate plan to blow up the Muslim Dome of the Rock on Jerusalem's Temple Mount,

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for ideological-religious reasons, was of special significance. It showed that some prominent members of Gush Emunim, who started their careers as peaceful, idealistic settlers, had become extremely millenarian, radicalized to the point of considering catastrophe a means of achieving national and religious redemption.

The terrorism introduced by the members of the underground was not unprecedented. In the 1930s and 1940s there existed in Israel (then Palestine) two small Jewish underground groups which conducted a very sophisticated terror campaign against both the Arabs and the British.¹ But following the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, these movements ceased to exist. The newly-established state became terrorism-free. Terrorism was, for many years, considered in Israel a barbaric Arab practice. Very few people believed, until 1980, that Israeli Jews were capable, morally or politically, of producing terrorism. The underground of Gush Emunim disproved this conviction. It did to Israelis what other idealistic movements did, in the last three decades, to other democratic societies—taught them that their political system was not immune to violence and was capable of generating *intrademocratic* terrorism.

This study was stimulated by the general desire to understand the psycho-political mechanisms that produce terrorism within a democracy, a political system usually not associated with this type of action.

This general interest was translated into five specific research questions regarding Gush Emunim.

- (1) What were the historical conditions that led to the radicalization of Gush Emunim and to the emergence of the underground?
- (2) What were the ideological predicaments of Gush Emunim that made it possible for some of its members to consider violence as a necessary and legitimate means for achieving their goals?
- (3) How was the underground formed and what was the nature of the behavioral transformation that led its young and idealistic members to become committed terrorists?
- (4) How did the group operate? What forms of terrorism did it carry out? How were these forms of terror perceived and justified by the members of the group?
- (5) Where and how does the case of the Gush Emunim underground fit into our general understanding of social and political violence within democratic societies?

The answers to these questions will be presented in three descriptive sections: History, Ideology and Terrorism. A final analytical section will try to place the lesson learned from the study of the Gush Emunim underground within a broader theoretical perspective.

History

The Emergence of Gush Emunim

Gush Emunim was officially born in 1974 as a reaction to the Yom Kippur War. But the spiritual inspiration for the new movement came directly out of the events of Israel's previous conflict, the Six-

Day War of 1967. Israel's swift victory, which brought about the reunification of Jerusalem, the return to Israel of biblical Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), the conquest of Sinai, and the takeover of the Golan Heights, was perceived by many Israelis as an unworldly event. They simply could not believe it was all real. Zionist religious Jews were especially stunned. The new event did not square with the nonmessianic, pragmatic stand they had maintained for years. It must have been a miracle. The God of Israel had once again showed his might. He came to the rescue of his people in their worst moment of fear and anxiety and, as in the days of old, turned an unbearable situation upside down. In one strike he placed the whole traditional Eretz Yisrael—the object of prayers and yearnings of thousands of years—in the hands of his loyal servants.

But while most of the nation, including the religious community, was still shocked and overwhelmed, there was one small religious school that was not. This school centered around Yeshivat Merkaz ha-Rav in Jerusalem and around the theology of the Kook family. The head of the Yeshiva, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, who succeeded the founder of the school (his revered father Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak ha-Cohen Kook), was intensely preoccupied with the incorporation of the entire *Eretz Yisrael* into the state of Israel. His dreams were widely shared with his devoted students and were discussed in many courses and halakhic deliberations.² Following the teaching of his father, and the belief that ours is a messianic age in which the Land of Israel, in its entirety, is to be reunited, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook left no doubt in the hearts of his students that in their lifetimes they were to see the great event. Distinct from the rest of the religious community, the student body of Merkaz ha-Rav was mentally and intellectually ready to absorb the consequences of the Six-Day War—but not before witnessing a unique, seemingly miraculous event.

On the eve of Independence Day in May 1967, graduates of the Yeshiva met at Merkaz ha-Rav for an alumni reunion. As was his custom, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook delivered a festive sermon, in the midst of which his quiet voice suddenly rose, and he bewailed the partition of historic Eretz Yisrael.³ His faithful students were led to believe that this situation was intolerable and must not last. When three weeks later, in June 1967, they found themselves citizens of an enlarged state of Israel, the graduates of Merkaz ha-Rav were convinced that a genuine spirit of prophecy had come over their rabbi on that Independence Day.

In one stroke a flame had been lit and the conditions made ripe for imparting the political ideology of Eretz Yisrael to a wider religious public, especially young Zionist religious Jews. The disciples of Rabbi Kook became missionaries equipped with unshakable confidence in the divine authority of their cause. They consequently transformed a wide religious community into a radical political constituency. According to the new ideo-theology, the entire historic Land of Israel would have to be annexed, immediately, to the State of Israel, whether by military action or by settlement and the legal extension of Israeli sovereignty.

The new theology of Eretz Yisrael, and the political spirit associated with it, had one problem. The secular government of Israel did not share its convictions and its messianic interpretation of politics. Pragmatic considerations prevailed, Judea and Samaria were not annexed, and Jewish settlement in the new territories was hesitant and slow. A core group of the future Gush Emunim, Elon Moreh—whose founders first formulated the settlement operational ideology—was preparing itself diligently to settle in the midst of Arab populated Samaria.⁴ Otherwise, little was taking place. The successful establishment of Kiryat Arba, a Jewish city adjacent to Hebron, was started illicitly and then authorized by the government. This strategy clearly showed the direction to follow. However, not until after the 1973 Yom Kippur War did these people feel a need to organize politically. Amid the gloomy public mood occasioned by the first territorial concessions in the Sinai Peninsula (required by the disengagement agreement with Egypt), the founders of Gush Emunim determined to oppose further territorial concessions and promote the extension of Israeli sovereignty over the occupied territories.

The founding meeting of Gush Emunim took place in March 1974 at Kfar Etzion, a West Bank kibbutz that had been seized by the Arabs in the War of Independence and recovered by Israel in the Six-Day War. This meeting had been preceded by informal discussions in which leading roles had been played by former students of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook. At first, Gush Emunim was a faction within the National Religious Party (NRP), which at that time was a partner in the labor coalition government. Distrustful of the NRP's position concerning the future of Judea and Samaria, the Gush people soon left the party and declared their movement's independence. Since then, they have refused to identify with any political party and have gained a unique political status, a combination of pioneering settlement organization, powerful pressure group, and wild extraparliamentary movement. This combination of inner and outer systemic operation proved highly effective and fruitful.⁵

Under the Labor-led government of Yitzhak Rabin (1974-77), Gush Emunim pursued three types of activity: it protested the interim agreements with Egypt and Syria; it staged demonstrations in Judea and Samaria to underscore the Jewish attachment to those parts of Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel, or biblical Palestine); and it carried out settlement operations in the occupied territories.

The most controversial issue pursued by Gush Emunim was the demand to settle the densely populated Arab Samaria. Basing its claim on God's promise to Abraham some 5,000 years earlier, Gush Emunim challenged the government's pragmatic Allon plan to avoid Jewish settlement in Samaria at all costs. The result was a political power struggle which ended, surprisingly, with Emunim's success. Through countless illicit settlement efforts and street demonstrations, the young pioneers of Gush Emunim got what they wanted: several semiofficial settlements in Samaria, the heartland of historic Eretz Yisrael.

The Likud victory in the elections of May 1977 and the declaration of the prime minister designate Menachem Begin that "we will have many more Elon Morehs" induced Gush Emunim leaders to believe in all sincerity that their extralegal period was over.⁶ And indeed the new regime accorded them full legitimacy. They were allowed to settle Samaria. Their settlement organization, Amana, was legitimized as an official settlement movement. Many of them welcomed this official acceptance and were happy to shed their extremist image.

But Gush Emunim did not rejoice for long. Despite the Gush's expectations, the government did not come up with a large-scale settlement program. The constraints of daily policymaking, Begin's failing health, and especially the pressures of the American government all began to leave their mark on the cabinet. The government was still sympathetic—Minister of Agriculture Ariel Sharon did not conceal his affection for Gush Emunim—but it gradually became clear that even under a Likud administration it might have to use the extralegal tactics it had devised during the Rabin regime.

The Emergence of the Underground

September 17, 1978, was the lowest point in the short history of Gush Emunim. Menachem Begin, Israel's prime minister, signed the Camp David Accords with Egypt and the United States, leaving Emunim's people stunned and in disbelief. His agreement to return all of Sinai to the Egyptians, as well as his initiation of the Autonomy Plan (for the Palestinians of the West Bank and Ghaza), was inconceivable to them. For many years, these people had led themselves to believe that Begin, the great champion of undivided Eretz Yisrael, was their best insurance against territorial compromise with the Arabs. Most of them were not Begin's traditional supporters but came to identify with him politically. His commitments to have "many more Elon Morehs" had for them a special appeal.

The Camp David Accords presented to Gush Emunim a challenge of unprecedented magnitude. The accords signified a human (Begin) error capable of stopping, or at least halting, an inevitable divine process, the process of redemption. How were they, members of a young and inexperienced political movement, to respond? Even their elderly rabbis were not sure, and most of the reactions indicated despair and confusion.² For a while it looked as if Gush Emunim would fold.

The most extreme reaction to the Camp David Accords was not known until the April 1984 arrest of the members of the Gush Emunim underground. When it was first apprehended, and a long time after the beginning of its trial, the group was considered an *ad hoc* terror team aimed at avenging PLO terrorism. However, it is now established that the first contacts of the leaders of the group took place late in 1978 and had nothing to do with revenge against Arab terrorism. The only issue on their agenda was blowing up what they called the *abomination*—the Muslim Dome of the Rock.³ The idea was brought up by two remarkable individuals, Yeshua Ben Shoshan and Yehuda Etzion. Both men, although closely affiliated with Gush Emunim and its settlement drive, were nevertheless not typical members. More than most of their colleagues, they were intensely preoccupied with the mysteries of the process of regeneration that was about to bring the Jewish People—perhaps in their own lifetime—to its redemption.

The Kabbalistic Ben Shoshan and the Zealot Etzion brought the disappointment of Gush Emunim from the Camp David Accords to its peak. Literally messianic, the two convinced themselves that the historical setback must have had a deeper cause than Begin's simple weakness. It was a direct signal from Heaven that a major national offence was committed, a sin that was responsible for the political disaster and its immense spiritual consequences. Only one prominent act of desecration could match the magnitude of the setback: the presence of the Muslims and their shrine on Temple Mount, the holiest Jewish site, the sacred place of the first, second and third (future) temples.²

It is not precisely clear when the group was seriously solidified by the two, and under what conditions. But the most important development in those early years certainly took place in Yehuda Etzion's mind. This energetic young man discovered the writings of an unknown ultranationalist thinker Shabtai Ben Dov. Ben Dov, who for years was an unimportant official in Israel's Ministry of Industry and Commerce, developed in total isolation a grand theory of active national redemption. Among other notions, the new theory brought life into such ideas as the resumption of the biblical kingdom of Israel and the building of the third temple. The man wrote about territorial expansion, national moral expurgation, and the establishment of Jewish law in Israel. Drawing on the almost forgotten tradition of ultranationalist poet Uri Zvi Grinberg, but with a post-1967 religious enthusiasm, Ben Dov dared to think the unthinkable—a total and *concrete* transformation of the nation into a sacred people and a holy state. No one, including Gush Emunim rabbis, had done it before. Etzion, who only slowly absorbed his new discovery of the writings of Ben Dov, decided to devote himself completely to their publication.¹⁰ By 1979, Ben Dov was dead after a long illness. But in the mind of Yehuda Etzion, his ideas were very much alive.

Some time early in 1980 a secret meeting was convened by Yehuda Etzion and his friend Menachem Livni. The meeting was attended by eight men.¹¹ This was the first time in which the Temple Mount operation was spelled out in great detail. The main speaker was Yehuda Etzion, who presented his new redemption theology in its grand contours. Etzion told the group that the removal of the Muslim mosques would spark a new light in the nation and would trigger a major spiritual revolution. He appeared convinced that the operation would solve once and for all the problems of the people of Israel. His tone and spirit were prophetic and messianic.¹² The other speakers were more cautious. They raised technical as well as substantial political questions. Some did not believe the job could be tackled operationally, and others worried about the political and international consequences. Menachem Livni, a Hebron engineer and captain in the reserves who emerged as the operational head of the group and the most considerate and balanced person, agreed with Etzion in principle. He was, however, apprehensive about the immense

consequences. Livni's conclusion, accepted by the rest of the group, was that concrete preparations for blowing up the Dome of the Rock could start immediately, irrespective of a final operative decision. There were so many details to be worked out that the question of a final decision to strike was irrelevant.¹³

May of 1980 was a critical month for the evolution of the Jewish underground. On Friday, May 3, a group of yeshiva students returning to Hadassah House in Hebron from a sabbath prayer was fired upon by Arabs at close range. Six students died instantly and several others were wounded. The attack was not an isolated case. It came against the background of growing anti-Jewish violence in Hebron and in other parts of Judea and Samaria. The settler community was certain that the attack was masterminded by the Palestinian National Guidance Committee in Judea and Samaria, an unofficial PLO front organization which was allowed by Defense Minister Ezer Weizman to operate almost freely. It was generally felt that only a massive settler retaliation could put things back in order. Following two unofficial meetings in Kiryat Arba, attended by the communal rabbis, it was decided to act. Menachem Livni, a local resident, knew whom to contact—his friend and partner in the planned operation at the Temple Mount, Yehuda Etzion.¹⁴ Instead of committing a retaliatory mass murder, in the custom of Arab terrorists, the two decided to strike at the top. The cars of five Arab leaders most active in the National Guidance Committee were to be blown up. The plan was to injure these people severely without killing them. The invalid leaders were to remain a living symbol for a long time to come.

The "mayors affair" was crowned with partial success. Two of the leaders involved, Mayor Bassam Shakaa of Nablus and Mayor Karim Khalef of Ramalla, were instantly crippled. Two others were saved when the demolition teams failed to wire their cars. The fifth case ended with an Israeli tragedy. The mayor of El Bireht whose garage was also set up to explode, was not at home. A police demolition expert rushed to the place [and] had mistakenly activated the explosive device. He was seriously wounded and blinded.

While the "mayors affair" had no direct relation to the paradigmatic idea of the group, the Temple Mount plot, it apparently boosted the spirits of the plotters, for the settlers in Judea and Samaria applauded it overwhelmingly. The group thus resumed preparations for its assault on the Dome of the Rock. Indeed, Etzion, who masterminded the plant and Livni, an expert on explosives, studied Temple Mount and the Dome of the Rock in minute detail for two years. Following dozens of surveillance hikes to the mount, a careful construction study of the mosque, and the theft of a huge quantity of explosives from a military camp in the Golan Heights, a full attack plan was worked out. Twenty-eight precision bombs were manufactured to destroy the Dome without causing any damage to its surroundings. The architects of the operation planned to approach the place silently but were ready to kill the guards if necessary. For that purpose they purchased special Uzi silencers and gas canisters. More than twenty people were to take part in the operation.¹⁵ Since the time of the final Israeli evacuation of the Jewish settlements in Sinai agreed upon in the peace treaty was approaching rapidly, the operation, which could prevent it and reverse the whole peace process, was to take place no later than early 1982.

The underground suffered, however, from one major drawback. None of the individuals involved, including Etzion, Livni, and Ben Shoshan, was an authoritative rabbi. The question of a rabbinical authority had already come up in the first meeting in 1980. Most of the members of the group made it clear that they could not operate without the blessing of a recognized rabbi. But all the rabbis the group approached, including Gush Emunim's mentor Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, refused to grant their blessings. It is not clear how much of the planned strike had been spelled out to these authorities. But Livni, who needed the rabbinical approval, was left with no doubt. He *did not* have a green light. When the final date of decision arrived, it was patently clear that only two individuals were ready to proceed, the originators of the idea, Etzion and Ben Shoshan. The grand plan had to be shelved.

The indefinite postponement in 1982 of the Temple Mount operation signified a major break in the short history of the Gush Emunim underground. It meant, for all practical purposes, the removal of the millenarian part of the plan—the aspect so attractive and dear to Etzion and Ben Shoshan—from the agenda. It is therefore not surprising that when the underground struck again in July 1983, the two played minor roles. The operation took place in the Islamic college of Hebron in response to the murder of a Yeshiva student. It was deadly. Following an open attack on the school, just after its noon break, three students were killed and 33 wounded. While logistical support was provided by former group members, the operation itself was carried out by three men who were not involved in the "mayors affair." All three were extremist settlers in Hebron recruited by Menachem Livni (who masterminded the action). The attack was not as sophisticated as the first but otherwise followed the same logic. It was waged in response to a growing wave of anti-Jewish violence, culminating in the murder of a Yeshiva student in broad daylight. It expressed fatalism and a growing frustration with the government's inability to defend the settlers, and it was approved by rabbinical authorities.¹⁶ It was followed by some smaller acts of terrorism.

The emerging Hebronite fatalism was most visible in the last major operation of the group, the one meant to be the most devastating. In a response to a new wave of Arab terrorism—this time not in Hebron but in Jerusalem and near Ashkelon—Shaul Nir, the most aggressive member of the underground, became impatient. This young man considered the earlier attack on the Islamic college a great success. Determined to make it a model operation, he managed to convince the local rabbis that another decisive strike was needed.¹⁷ Armed with their authority, he prevailed over the unsure Livni and made him plan an unprecedented brutal act. Five Arab buses full of passengers were to be blown up in revenge for similar attacks on Israeli buses by Palestinian terrorists. The buses were to explode on Friday at 4:30 p.m., at a time and place Jews were not expected on the road.

The explosive devices were placed under the busses' fuel tanks to cause maximum damage and casualties.¹⁸ Every detail was taken care of . . . except one. By 1984 the Israeli Secret Service had finally spotted the Hebron group. Immediately after the completion of the wiring, the whole group was arrested, bringing the secretive part of the story of the first Gush Emunim underground to its end. The open part of the tale continues. Ever since the exposure of the group, a fierce debate about its legitimacy and its significance has been conducted continuously within Gush Emunim.

Ideology

Gush Emunim: Between Messianism and Fundamentalism

A thorough examination of the spiritual world of Gush Emunim, which includes its theology, political ideology, and modes of behavior, suggests that the movement is both messianic¹⁹ and fundamentalist.²⁰ It is messianic because it maintains that ours is a messianic age in which redemption is a relevant concept and a possible historical event. It is fundamentalist because it reads the entire historical reality of our time, including the indications for redemption, through the sacred scriptures of the Torah and the Halakha and prescribes on this basis a proper mode of behavior for its members and for the nation.

The relation between the messianic component of Gush Emunim and the fundamentalist element in the movement may well be illuminated by comparing the theologies of the two spiritual founding fathers of the movement, Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak ha-Cohen Kook—the man who before his death in 1935 established Yeshivat Mercaz ha-Rav—and his son Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, who succeeded him in the Yeshiva and lived long enough to usher in Gush Emunim as a political and social movement. Rabbi Kook the father, by far the more original thinker of the two, believed that the era of redemption of the Jewish people had already begun. It was, he said, marked by the rise of modern Zionism the Balfour Declaration, and the growing Zionist enterprise in Palestine.²¹ Kook's interpretation of redemption was original and daring. It signified an immense deviation from the traditional Jewish belief that the messiah could only come through the single metahistorical appearance of an individual redeemer. And there were clearly some elements of heresy in the new interpretation, for it assigned a holy and redemptive status to the secular Zionists—the modern, nonobserving Jews. Kook's argument that the lay Zionists were unknowingly God's true emissaries did not win him much support. This distinguished man, the first chief Rabbi of the Jewish community in Palestine, was constantly castigated by the anti-Zionist ultra-orthodoxy.

But Kook the father never advocated political fundamentalism or "operative messianism." Writing in the 1920s and 1930s, he wholly supported the vision of the secular Zionist movement, one of slow and prudent progress towards independence. He did not establish a political movement and did not call for a policymaking process based on a daily reading of the Torah. The theology that was studied for years in Yeshivat Mercaz ha-Rav had no immediate consequences and made no exclusivist political demands.

Israel's victory in the Six-Day War transformed the status of Kook's theology. Suddenly it became clear to his students that they were indeed living in the messianic age. Ordinary reality assumed a sacred aspect; every event possessed theological meaning and was part of the metahistorical process of redemption.²² Though shared by many religious authorities, the view was most effectively expounded by Kook's son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda. This man, who before 1967 was only an unknown interpreter of his father's writings, became a leader of a fundamentalist movement.²³ He defined the state of Israel as the halakhic kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Israel as the kingdom of heaven on earth. Every Jew living in Israel was holy; all phenomena, even the secular, were imbued with holiness.²⁴ Not only Kook's students but the rest of the nation was expected to recognize the immense transformation and to behave accordingly. The government of Israel was counted upon to conduct its affairs, or at least part of them, according to Maimonides' "rules of kings" and to be judged by these rules and by Torah prescriptions.²⁵

The single most important conclusion of the new theology had to do with Eretz Yisrael, the land of Israel. The land—every grain of its soil—was declared holy in a fundamental sense. The conquered territories of Judea and Samaria had become inalienable and nonnegotiable, not as a result of political or security reasoning, but because God had promised them to Abraham 5,000 years earlier, and because the identity of the nation was shaped by this promise.²⁶ Redemption could only take place in the context of greater Eretz Yisrael, and territorial withdrawal meant forfeiting redemption. The ideologists of Gush Emunim ruled that the Gush had to become a settlement movement because settling Judea and Samaria was the most meaningful act of human participation in the process of redemption.

The messianic enthusiasm of Gush Emunim, and the conviction of the spiritual heads of the movement that redemption was at hand, greatly shaped the operative ideology of the movement. In fact, it shaped the lack of such ideology. The heads of the movement, mostly rabbis, were very excited about the government of Israel that had commanded the army to its greatest victory ever. Following Rabbi Kook's theology, they were certain that the government was the legitimate representative of the kingdom of Israel in the making.²⁷ Their job, according to this interpretation, was not to contest the government but to settle Judea and Samaria and to make sure that, on the critical issue of the territories, the nation did not go

astray. That is the reason why Gush Emunim was, for many years, equivocal and unclear on three critical political issues: *the Arabs, democracy, and the rule of law*. However, over the years the members of the movement discovered, to their great dismay, that the rest of the world was not as enthusiastic about their prescriptions. There were too many Palestinians in the West Bank who were not thrilled about becoming passive observers of the Jewish regeneration in "Judea and Samaria." There were too many Israelis who were happier with their imperfect democracy than with the mystical and unclear vision of halakhic redemption. And most important of all, there was an officially elected government whose heads were either not enthusiastic about settling all the West Bank or, even if they were, felt greatly bound by the law of the land and by Israel's international obligations.

The result of the encounter of Gush Emunim with the political reality of the world has been a very confused and unsystematic operative ideology. While the leaders of the Gush wanted to maintain the constructive and altruistic posture they started with, they realized that redemption could not be reached without pain. They furthermore discovered that their fundamentalist nature required that they draw their political inspiration not from the experience of the democratic West but from the tradition of the Torah and the 12th century luminary Maimonides. The results have been very significant. The Palestinian Arabs, according to Gush Emunim, do not constitute a nation and are not entitled to collective political rights in Eretz Yisrael. The land is not theirs. The best they can hope for is to get the individual rights of what the Torah calls "stranger alien," the alien who fully recognizes the hegemony of the Jewish nation, and is consequently allowed to have full individual residence rights. But if the Jewish hegemony is not recognized and upheld chapter and verse, then the Palestinians have to be treated *today* as the *Canaanites* were treated in the old days: either be subdued and subjected in Eretz Yisrael or be evicted.²⁸

Gush Emunim's position on democracy and the rule of law is equally equivocal. In principle, democracy is bound to give way to halakha theocracy, but this does not have to take place now. If the government of Israel fulfills its prescribed duties—settling all the land and making no territorial concessions to the Arabs—then democracy and the prevailing legal system may be allowed to function. But if conflict between democracy and Zionism (a la Gush Emunim) erupts, then Zionism takes precedence and extralegal action becomes legitimate. The modern state of Israel was not established, according to Emunim's ideologists, in order to have another legal democracy under the sun. Two thousand years after its destruction it was revived for only one purpose, to redeem the nation and eventually the world. The prescription for this redemption is not written in the charter of the United Nations, it is writ large in the Torah, the book of books.²⁹

Yehuda Etzion and the Theology of Active Redemption

One topic that never was on the agenda of Gush Emunim was the destruction of *Harem El Sharif*, the Muslim Dome of the Rock. While many members of this movement were greatly disturbed by the "desecrating" presence of the Muslims—on the place to which even most Jews were not allowed to enter—almost none of them thought of blowing up the shrine. The feeling of unease was a product of the paradoxical situation created in 1967. While the reunification of Jerusalem signified the nation's return to its holiest place after 2,000 years, it also ruined for religious Jews much of this achievement. The government of Israel, acting out of its sovereign will, decided that Temple Mount must remain, for reasons of political prudence, in Muslim hands.

The fundamentalist members of Gush Emunim managed to live with the paradox because of their "Kookist" theology. They believed that the lay government of Israel was legitimate and holy, that despite

its many mistakes it had a bright future. Under the guidance of God, they felt, it was bound to change in time and lead the nation to redemption, just as it had in the Six-Day War. There was a point in struggling against the government on the simple and clear issue of settling Judea and Samaria, but there was no sense in disobeying it on such a sensitive issue as Temple Mount. The matter had to be left to God and to his mysterious ways of directing the world.

It was on the issue of Temple Mount that the underground deviated sharply from Gush Emunim, and the person who solidified the challenge to the official theology was Yehuda Etzion. This young man, 27 years old when he first developed his revolutionary theory, was a typical product of the movement. While he himself did not study in Mercaz ha-Rav, his rabbi in Yeshivat Alon Shvut was Yoel Ben Nun, one of the most influential graduates of "Mercaz."³⁰ But something happened to Etzion in 1978. Probably as a result of the crisis of Camp David and because of his immense interest in the mystery of redemption, he discovered a whole new world, the ultranationalist tradition worked out by the poet Uri Zvi Grinberg in the 1930s, the tradition of the "Kingdom of Israel."

The unique feature of this vision (which in Etzion's case was redeveloped by the unknown thinker Shabtai Ben Dov) was that it spelled out the notion of active redemption. According to Ben Dov, there was no need to wait for another miracle. All the conditions for concrete redemption were already present; one had merely to act. The revolutionary element in Ben Dov's ideology was his concept of redemption. He spoke about building the Third Temple and the institutionalization of Jewish theocracy on earth. He envisioned a system governed by Torah law and run by a supreme rabbinical court and a Sanhedrin (the council of the seventy wise men). None of the leaders and ideologists of Gush Emunim had ever spoken in such concrete terms. None of them dared press the issue.³¹

It is not clear whether Etzion would have followed the ideology of Ben Dov had the debacle of Camp David not taken place. But in 1978 he started to develop a thorough intellectual critique of Gush Emunim and the ideology of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook. Etzion's new theology was only written down and published after he was sent to prison in 1984, but there is no doubt that this is the system that inspired his activity within the underground.

The main thrust of the new theory is directed against Kook's subservience to the lay government of Israel. Etzion could not understand why Gush Emunim, which has identified the messianic quality of the present time, should wait until the secular politicians reach the same conclusion. He refused to grant a full legitimacy to "erroneous" rulers who were committing outrageous mistakes. Attacking the spirit of Mercaz ha-Rav, the fountainhead of Emunim's ideology, he wrote,

... the sense of criticism—which is a primary condition for any correction—perished here entirely. The State of Israel was granted in Mercaz ha-Rav, an unlimited and independent credit. Its operations—even those that stand in contrast to the model of Israel's Torah—are conceived of as "God's will," or a revelation of his grace. There is no doubt that had the state announced its sovereignty in our holy mountain, driving thereby the Waqf (the Muslim religious authority—E.S.) out and removing the Dome of the Rock—it would have won a full religious backing. The voice coming from the school would have said "strengthen Israel in greatness and crown Israel with glory." But now that the state does nothing, what do we hear? That these acts are prohibited because it is not allowed. Moreover, letting the Arabs stay is a grace of God since we are, anyway, not allowed into the mount.³²

Yeshivat Mercaz ha-Rav, and by implication Gush Emunim itself, has become a support system of secular Zionism according to Etzion. Narrowing its perspectives down to settlement only, it does not think in grand terms, does not challenge the inactive government of Israel, and fails to do what God wishes it to do.

What, then, is to be done? What direction should the misled Gush Emunim have taken, had its rabbis read the Torah "correctly?" Following Ben Dov and the ultranationalist School of the "Kingdom of Israel," Etzion maintains emphatically that the Torah portrays the "deserved model" of life as a nation. This is,

... the proper kingdom of Israel that we have to establish here between the two rivers (the Euphrates and the Nile—E. S.). This kingdom will be directed by the Supreme Court which is bound to sit on the placet chosen by God to emit his inspiration a site which will have a temple, an altar, and a king chosen by God. All the people of Israel will inherit the land to labor and to keep.³³

Etzion's deviation from the standard theology of Gush Emunim is thus very clear. By his thinking, it is fully legitimate to portray *now* the contours of the final stage of redemption, including a *theocratic government* centered on Temple Mount and a country that controls, in addition to present-day Israel, the Sinai, Jordan, Syria, and parts of Lebanon and Iraq. Moreover, it is mandatory to strive *now* for the fulfillment of this vision, and Gush Emunim or another devoted movement should take the lead in the forthcoming struggle.

Why did Etzion focus on Temple Mount? How did he justify an operation more incredible and dangerous than any anti-Arab plan ever conceived of in Israel since the beginning of Zionism in the 19th century? How does the Temple Mount operation fit into Etzion's general theory of redemption? In a unique monograph, *Temple Mount*, published while in jail, Etzion explained,

David's property in Temple Mount is therefore a real and eternal property in the name of all Israel. It was never invalidated and never will be. No legality, or ownership claim, which are not made in the name of Israel and for the need of rebuilding the temple, are valid.³⁴

The expurgation of Temple Mount will prepare the hearts for the understanding and further advancing of our full redemption. The purified Mount shall be—if God wishes—the ground and the anvil for the future process of promoting the next holy elevation.³⁵

The redemption of the nation was stopped, according to Etzion, on Temple Mount. Not until its expurgation—a step that had to be taken by the government of Israel but wasn't—could the grand process be renewed. And since "this horrible state of affairs" was not corrected by the government but was rather backed by it, the task had to be fulfilled by the most devoted and dedicated.

But how did Etzion, a very intelligent and educated man, believe that Israel could go unharmed with the destruction of the Dome of the Rock? How could it conquer Jordan, Syria, parts of Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon and transform itself, in front of the rest of the world, into a Khomeini-like theocracy? What did Etzion think about the constraints of political reality?

Reading Etzion, and talking to him, reveals a unique combination of an other-worldly messianic spirit and a very logical mind, a man who talks and thinks in the language of this world but totally lives in another. Etzion's response to these questions is based on the only intellectual explanatory construct possible: a distinction between the *laws of existence* and the *laws of destiny*.

Securing and preserving life or its preservation is an "utmost norm" for all the living nature, for humanity in general—and for us, *Israel*, too. This is indeed a norm that dictates laws, and in the name of which, people go to war. But as for ourselves "our God is not theirs." Not only is our existential experience different from theirs but also from their very definition. For the Gentiles, life is mainly a *life of existence*, while ours is a *life of destiny*, the life of a kingdom

of priests and a holy people. We exist in the world in order to actualize destiny.³⁶

The question about the constraints of political reality is relevant only to those who live by the laws of existence. But,

Once adopting the laws of destiny instead of the laws of existence, Israel will be no more an ordinary state, one whose eyes are rolled from hour to hour . . . she will become the kingdom of Israel by its very essence.

It is therefore impossible to "stick" to the present state some "good advices," regarding its specific behavior in an isolated "local" situation in the name of the laws of destiny. The stage of this change will take place, inevitably, in the immense comprehensive move of the transformation from the state of Israel to the kingdom of Israel."³⁷

Operation Temple Mount was bound, according to Etzion, to trigger the transformation of the state of Israel from one system of laws to another. It was meant to elevate the nation now to the status of the kingdom of Israel, a kingdom of priests capable of actualizing the laws of destiny and of changing the nature of the world.

Terrorism

A close study of the underground suggests that while it was mainly shaped by the millenarian theology of Yehuda Etzion, it ended up with rugged vigilante terrorism. This internal evolution, which left Etzion himself isolated and disappointed, is a revealing exercise. It shows the course through which *idealistic dreams* produce *idealistic terrorism* and the way in which idealistic terrorism is *routinized* into *professional terrorism*. While the Jewish underground was caught before its evolution into a professional organization of killers, it had all the potential ingredients within it.

Toward Millenarian Terrorism: The Operation That Did Not Take Place

There is no question that the fundamental psychopolitical framework for the emergence of the underground was formed within Gush Emunim long before the pact among Etzion and his friends. This framework was constructed with the ideology of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, who created within his followers immense expectations. Many observers of Gush Emunim have not failed to identify its behavioral messianic craze, that extra-normal quality of intense excitement and hypernomian behavior³⁸ that produced within many members of the movement constant expectations of progress toward redemption.³⁹ David Rapoport, who studied the affinity between terrorism and messianism, recently observed that:

Once a messianic advent is seen as imminent, particular elements of a messianic doctrine become critical in pulling a believer in the direction of terror.⁴⁰

Rapoport argued convincingly that messianism—once it becomes operational—and terrorism imply extranormal behavior, a pattern of action and orientation which is predicated on the conviction that the traditional conventions of morality and conduct are not binding.

Under certain conditions, that usually imply a failure of an expected redemption to materialize, it is possible, according to Rapoport, for messianic people to resort to extranormal acts of violence. Either because they want to prove to themselves that redemption remains relevant, or because they want to convince God that this is the case, they may opt for exceptional catastrophe.⁴¹ Menachem Livni, the operational "commander" of the underground, described to his investigators how it was all born.

Shortly after President Sadat's visit of Israel, I was approached by a friend who showed me the picture of the Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount—to which I shall heretofore refer as the "abomination." My friend argued that the existence of the abomination on Temple Mount, our holiest place, was the root cause of all the spiritual errors of our generation and the basis of Ishmael's (i.e. the Arabs'—E.S.) hold in Eretz Yisrael. In this first meeting I did not clearly understand my friend and more meetings were held to which an additional friend joined.⁴²

What apparently happened after the crisis of Camp David is that most of the members of Gush Emunim, who were also shocked by the postponement of redemption, were able to follow old Rabbi Kook's instruction to maintain their allegiance to the Israeli government and to its legal system, but a few were not. They gathered around Yehuda Etzion, Yeshua Ben Shoshan and Menachem Livni, who all believed they had a better response to the disaster, an act that would alleviate the misery in a single strike.

The spiritual and mysterious nature of the project was described in great detail by many members of the underground. Long before they started to discuss operational matters, such as explosives and guns, they immersed themselves in halakhic issues and kabbalistic spiritual deliberations. Chaim Ben David, who attended the meetings since 1978, described how he was recruited and how it all took place.

In about 1977 or 1978, I was approached by Gilaad Peli from Moshav Keshet in the Golan Heights, a man I have known since 1975 and his activity within Gush Emunim. He told me to come to Yeshua Ben Shoshan with whom I had a previous learning experience in Torah subjects. Following the learning part, Yeshua and Gilaad discussed with me a plan to remove the Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount—a plan meant to be part of a spiritual redemption of the people of Israel. The great innovation for me was that this was a "physical operation" capable of generating a spiritual operation.

I agreed to join the group and participate in its project. Then came the stages of the meetings and conferences in Yeshua's house as well as in an isolated house owned by Ben Shoshan's relatives. There were many sessions and I am sure I did not attend them all because of my physical distance. The meetings were attended by Menachem Livni, Yehuda Etzion, Yeshua Ben Shoshan, Gilaad Peli and myself. There were several sessions in Yeshua's house without his personal presence In the sessions the spiritual side of the idea was discussed as well as questions relating to the possible acceptance of, and response to, the act by the people of Israel. Then they started to discuss operational matters. The first idea was to bomb (the place) from the air—we had a pilot in our group but it is not clear whether it was serious or just a joke. Finally, it was decided to blow up the Mosque by explosives.⁴³

As we have already seen, Operation Temple Mount never took place. Despite three years of intense preparations and planning that far exceeded anything else done by the group, the project was finally

abandoned by Menachem Livni, the "commander." Only two men, Etzion and Ben Shoshan, wanted to go ahead⁴⁴ when none of Gush Emunim's main rabbis was willing to cooperate. But in his final word on the issue, Livni did not appear disappointed or beaten:

In retrospect it appears to me that the honor of Temple Mount and the Temple itself, as well as the dignity of the people of Israel, instructs us that this operation should be carried out by a united nation and its government. We, on our behalf, did our best in front of heaven and earth, as if it was like "open for me a niche needle wide," and I pray that we shall be blessed to see the building of the Temple in our time. And comments that were made on Rabbi Akiva are true and relevant to all the events and all members involved, "Bless thee Rabbi Akiva for being caught following the Torah." ⁴⁵

A close reading of Livni's statement suggests a mystical approach. Paradoxically, the statement epitomizes the entire millenarian nature of the underground. Livni does not only speak to his interrogators, he also appeals to God. While somewhat apologetic, he is nevertheless proud and hopeful. He seems to believe that although he and his colleagues did not remove the Dome of the Rock, nor did they shun their apocalyptic mission. In fact, he argues, they did all they could. They identified the national spiritual malaise, they singled out the "abomination" as the root cause of it, they delved into the problem, studied it, and prayed about it, and finally they went all the way prepared to act. Only inches away from the operation, they did not get God's final signal, his ultimate O.K. God, he felt, should know how devoted they were and how serious their mission was. He should be aware of the "needle wide" niche they opened. Perhaps he would move the government and the nation to concrete action.

From Settler Extralegalism to Vigilante Terrorism

The underground of Gush Emunim became a terror organization on June 2, 1980. It was on that night and under the command of Menachem Livni and Yehuda Etzion that the group blew up the cars of two Arab West Bank mayors held responsible for anti-Jewish terrorism. The act that provoked the attack was the brutal murder of six Yeshiva students near Beit Hadassah in Hebron. The "mayors affair" was welcomed by the settler community in Judea and Samaria as well as by many segments of the Israeli society. It opened the way to several additional terror plans and operations that took place between 1982 and 1984. The most brutal among these operations was the attack on July 26, 1983, on the Islamic College of Hebron. The attackers, who responded to another murder of a Yeshiva student in Hebron, killed three Muslim students and wounded thirty-three. In 1984 the group drew up a plan to bomb the men's dormitory of Bir Zeit University in Ramala. When the operation was postponed, because of a governmental shutdown of the university, it was replaced by a more comprehensive one—an attempt to blow up five Arab buses full of passengers. Every detail of this plan was perfectly worked out, including the final wiring of the buses on April 27, 1984. But at the last moment the whole conspiracy was exposed and the bombs were defused in time. The arrest that followed ended up the career of the most daring Jewish terror underground in nearly forty years.

A review of the confessions and testimonies of all the members of the underground, and especially of Livni's and Etzion's, the leaders, suggests that the issue at stake was not religious and that it had only slight relation to redemption or messianism. The name of the game was revenge. The only association between the Dome of the Rock plan and the acts of terror that actually took place was the identity of the perpetrators. The group that blew up the mayors' cars, and some of those who continued to operate until 1984, were the same people who started to prepare themselves, morally and spiritually, to expurgate

Temple Mount. But the motivations and the thinking were totally different. Discussing his participation in the "mayors affair" in relation to his main concern, Temple Mount, Yehuda Etzion told the court:

Planning and executing the attack on the murder chieftains took only one month of my life, one month that started with the assassination night of six boys in Hebron, and ended up in conducting this operation. I insist that this operation was right. So right, in fact, that to the best of my understanding . . . even the law that prevails in the state of Israel could recognize its justice or ought to have recognized it as a pure act of self defense It is unquestionable that in our present reality . . . the reality of the sovereign state of Israel . . . the defense forces of the state had to take care of this matter, quickly, neatly and effectively, so that nobody could have, in his right mind, thought about such operation, I, furthermore, do not deny that it was a clear case of undue excess. But the situation at stake was a case in which the "policeman" responsible for the matter not only stepped aside . . . , not only ignored the gravity of the case, and the fact that the murderers were allowed to act freely . . . , but developed with them a friendly relationship This situation, Sirs, was a case of no choice, a condition that created a need to act in the full sense of the word, for the very sake of the preservation of life.⁴⁶

No reader familiar with the literature on vigilante movements could fail to detect in Etzion's speech the classical logic of the *vigilante mind*. What Etzion so eloquently told the court was that he took one month of his life, a life otherwise devoted to the approximation of redemption, to become a vigilante terrorist. A vigilante movement, we should recall, never sees itself in a state of principled conflict, either with the government or with the prevailing *concept* of law. It is not revolutionary and does not try to bring down authority. Rather, what characterizes the vigilante state of mind is the profound conviction that the government, or some of its agencies, have failed to enforce their own laws or to establish their own order in an area under their jurisdiction.⁴⁷ Backed by the fundamental norm of self-defense and speaking in the name of what they believe to be the valid law of the land, vigilantes, in effect, enforce the law and execute justice. "Due process of law" is the least of their concerns.⁴⁸ When Yehuda Etzion responded in May 1980 to Menachem Livni's request for help in avenging the blood of six Yeshiva students murdered in Hebron, he was not thinking of messianism but of vigilantism. He took a short leave of absence from his main concern to take care of an altogether different business.

But how did Etzion, the messianic dreamer, suddenly become a rough vigilante? What was the psychosocial mechanism that made it possible for him—and also for his millenarian followers in the underground—to switch from their *other-worldly* lofty concern about redemption to the *this-worldly* mundane concern about revenge and law and order? And why was the vigilante terrorism of the members of the underground legitimized by the rabbis of Gush Emunim who refused to support the millenarian terrorism on Temple Mount?

The answer to these questions, without which a full understanding of the underground is bound to be incomplete, has very little to do with either the teaching of Rav Kook or the intellectual climate of Gush Emunim. It concerns, instead, another facet of Gush Emunim, which until now was not elaborated upon, *the existential extralegalism of the movement* as a "frontier" operation in the West Bank. Gush Emunim, as Goldberg and Ben Zadok so well remind us, did not produce only strange messianic types, true believers that would walk the hills of Judea and Samaria expecting redemption to be delivered. It equally created a breed of *doers*, rugged frontier men who started their career as illicit political settlers and sustained it through a growing friction with their neighboring Arabs.⁴⁹

While the extralegal nature of Gush Emunim was a typical feature of the movement since its inception, its vigilante side was not recognized until the early 1980s. Rumors about settler violence against Arabs

prevailed, but with no proof. However, in 1982 a committee headed by Yehudit Carp, the state Deputy Attorney General, studied 70 cases of Jewish anti-Arab violent acts involving killings, woundings, physical assaults, property damage and the application of armed and unarmed threats. It found that 53 out of the 70 cases ended in no action. 43 of the files were closed because a suspect could not be found, 7 because of the nonexistence of official complaints, and 3 because of a lack of public interest to justify prosecution.⁵⁰

The vigilante nature of the settler community was examined in a comprehensive pioneering study conducted by David Weisburd, a young American Ph.D. candidate in 1983.⁵¹ Weisburd found that 28 percent of the male settlers and 5 percent of the female settlers, out of a sample of 500, admitted to having participated in some type of vigilante activity. 68 percent of Weisburd's respondents agreed with the statement that "it is necessary for the settlers to respond quickly and independently to Arab harassments of settlers and settlements." Following another finding, that only 13 percent of those questioned disapproved of vigilantism, Weisburd concluded:

The vigilantism of Gush Emunim settlers is part of an organized strategy of social control calculated to maintain order in the West Bank. Though a minority of settlers actually participate in vigilante acts, they are not isolated deviant figures in this settlement movement. Rather, those vigilantes are agents of the Gush Emunim community as a whole. They carry out a strategy of control that is broadly discussed and supported.⁵²

Weisburd's study of the vigilantism of the settler community, as well as the Carp report and other documented studies,⁵³ was written and published before the exposure of the Gush Emunim underground. They nevertheless provide us with useful factual and analytical perspectives to comprehend the actual terrorism of the group. They tell us that the communal leaders of Kiryat Arba—the Jewish city adjacent to Hebron—who convened after the Beit Hadassah murder of six students were not strangers to communal conflict, anti-Arab violence or vigilante justice. Extremist rabbis, soldiers and military reserve officers, and rugged settlers—all were used to the idea of communal reprisal. They also knew, as we are told by Weisburd, that the price for previous vigilante acts was very low.⁵⁴

The convergence point between the millenarian orientation of the underground and the vigilante spirit of the settlers that actually produced terrorism was described in some detail by Menachen Livni. Livni told his interrogators that, immediately following the Beit Hadassah murder, it was decided in Kiryat Arba to respond. A special action committee was assigned the job, but its members did not have the "adhesive spirit necessary to act." Livni then approached Rabbi Levinger, the leading authority in the city, and told him that "for these purposes we have to chose pure people, highly observan, and sinless, people with no shred of violence in them and who are disinclined to reckless action."⁵⁵ Levinger apparently approved and it was at that point that Livni asked Yehuda Etzion, not a resident of Kiryat Arbat to help him. Only then did the two decide to mobilize the entire group, which until that time was preoccupied with preliminary deliberations about Temple Mount. The group members were perceived by their leaders to be pure and devoted. They were not terrorists but rather God's emissaries. Their immense commitment and dedication to God and nation qualified them for the merciless task.

A key to the understanding of the operations that did and did not take place is the issue of the *rabbinal authority*. A careful reading of the confessions and testimonies of the members of the underground does not clarify how much of the *operational* part of the conspiracy was shared by the leading rabbis of Kiryat Arba. But it makes clear that none of the operations that took place was opposed by the rabbis and that all of the acts were, in fact, blessed by these authorities. The first operation, the "mayors affair," was opposed by Rabbi Levinger, but the reason for the objection was that Levinger preferred extreme action and recommended an indiscriminate act of mass violence. Rabbi Eliezer Waldman, a prominent Gush

Emunim rabbi and since 1981 a Knesset member, even volunteered, according to Livni, to participate in the first operation. Two other Hebron and Kiryat Arba rabbis were instrumental in inducing Livni to commit the last two operations that involved indiscriminate terrorism.⁵⁶ Shaul Nir, the man who conducted the murderous attack on the Islamic College in Hebron, told his interrogators:

I would like to add that in the time span of 3 years, I discussed the issue with 4 rabbis, all of whom expressed their support for warning operations within the Arab public I also heard the names of an additional three rabbis who stated their support in different stages of the operation.⁵⁷

Rabbinical refusal to support Operation Temple Mount is of crucial importance. It tells us that *the radicalization process that finally produced terrorism within Gush Emunim was not marginal but central*. It was a by-product of the movement's belief in its own redemptive role and in the necessity of settling Judea and Samaria at all costs. The idealistic and excited people who started in 1968 to settle Judea and Samaria did not go there with violent intentions. None of them expected to become a vigilante, a terrorist, or a terror supporter within just twelve years. But *the combination of messianic belief and a situation of endemic national conflict had within it a built-in propensity for incremental violence—extralegalism, vigilantism, selective terrorism, and, finally, indiscriminate mass terrorism*. Had the underground not been stopped in 1984, it would have likely become a Jewish IRA.

Extremism, Terrorism, and Democracy: Some General Conclusions

What do we learn from the story of the Jewish underground? What lesson is to be drawn from the reintroduction of Jewish terrorism into Israeli political life nearly forty years after its official demise? Is it possible to draw some general conclusions from the process of radicalization that finally led these idealistic young men to engage in terrorism, an extreme anti-democratic activity they could not have dreamed about before embarking on that course? Does the evolution of Gush Emunim, and its related underground, help us better understand and theorize about the complex relationship between extremist beliefs, terrorism, and political democracy?

It appears that there are two ways of approaching these questions and coming to grips with their answers. The first is to read the story of the underground within the narrow boundaries of its special circumstances: the Israeli conquest of the West Bank in 1967, the emergence of the theology of Yeshivat Mercaz ha-Rav, the unexpected peace with Egypt, and the growth of Arab resistance in Judea and Samaria. This perspective stresses the unique and the unprecedented. It leads to the conclusion that under a different set of conditions the whole affair would be most improbable. It tells us, in fact, that no general lesson can be learned from the case of the Jewish underground because it was special and unrepeatable. The writing of the entire paper, up to this point, was guided by this approach.

An altogether different avenue is the attempt to comprehend the evolution and radicalization of Gush Emunim within a broader perspective, one that avoids the *sui generis* explanatory strategy. According to this approach, Gush Emunim should be recognized as one of many movements of idealistic true believers that have developed in the last twenty-five years within Western democracy and radicalized to the point of producing anti-democratic organizations of terrorists. Seen in this perspective, the Jewish underground is not unique or unprecedented. Rather, it fits the larger category of movements that challenge the rules of the democratic game. Each of these movements arises out of specific circumstances; yet each is transformed from a non-terroristic entity into a terroristic one. No one who watched the young

enthusiastic members of the American, German, and French New-Left in the early 1960s expected them to produce, by the end of the decade, such organizations as Weatherman, the RAF (Baader-Meinehoff Gang) or *La Cause du Peuple*. No student of modern nationalism could predict in the 1950s that by the end of the following decade Irish nationalists, Basque extremists, and Armenian zealots would establish or revive the IRA, ETA, ASALA, and reintroduce intense terrorism into the Western Hemisphere. The Jewish underground of Gush Emunim has undoubtedly had its special circumstances. It was Jewish, fundamentalist, and messianic. It acted not against Jews but against Palestinian Arabs, whom it considered *external* terrorists. But legally and politically it acted within the context of political democracy. Just like other *intrademocratic* terror organizations, it introduced terrorism into a non-terroristic political culture, one that was not prepared for Jewish atrocities and was very surprised when they took place.

A careful comparative examination of many terror-producing radicalization processes that took place in the last three decades suggests that our previous understanding of the relationship between terrorism and democracy should be revised. The traditional naive belief that historical democracy is totally incompatible with violence and terrorism should give way to a more sophisticated explanatory model, one that recognizes that under specific, *but not uncommon*, conditions even the most accomplished democracy could generate an *intrasystemic* terrorism,⁵⁸ i.e., terrorism that is not imported from an external system but is generated by former democrats from within. This new understanding should, in my opinion, be governed by the following two general observations:

(a) Democracy, because of its inherently imperfect nature is constantly open to recurring appearances of extremism and violence.

(b) Political extremism in a democracy, just as in non-democratic systems, has a built-in potential for unrestrained violence and terrorism.

While these propositions could be expanded a great deal, a short elaboration on each of them may sufficiently clarify each.

The Violentization of Democracy

Today, it is undeniable that the emergence of secular and religious extremism in the West, over the last three decades, has dealt a mortal blow to two of the most cherished notions of the post-World War II social science: "the end of ideology" and "secularizaion." In the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s it was generally believed that the world was progressing and improving significantly. Post-industrial societies (i.e., democracies) were seen as capable of containing ideology⁵⁹ (i.e., partial knowledge, extremism, and political violence), and humanity was expected to pass from "ideology" to "sociology" (i.e., objective and scientific knowledge, capable of producing pragmatic and peaceful politics).⁶⁰ This general theory, that for all practical purposes predicted the decline of violence in politics, was not restricted to the post-industrial world. The Third World was also included in this grand vision. Developing countries were not expected to become democratic in one stroke but it was believed that they too were heading in the right direction, the "Westminster style of democracy." In the long run, even in this area, violence was expected to subside. Observers of Israeli politics who witnessed the decline of Zionism in the 1950s also thought in the grand terms of the "decline of ideology" and the rise of "pragmatic" politics. No new extremism was expected in Israel.

This optimistic philosophy of progress, formulated in the language of empirical social theory, was equally emphatic about religion. Religion and religious zealotry, considered by definition "irrational" and "obsolete," were expected to decline too. Like secular ideology and extremism, these phenomena had no room in a world dominated by the economic prosperity of the post-industrial society and by the reasoning of sociology. Jewish religiosity, Christian commitment, and Islamic zealotry had to go and, according to the new theory, were bound to do so through an all-embracing *process of secularization*.⁶¹

In the grand perspective of the "end of ideology" and "secularization," not only terrorism, but even political violence was an irrelevant concept. No one was expected to study it or pay any attention to its evolution. The 1968 edition of the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, which reflected the cumulative knowledge of the postwar generation of social scientists, did not include entries on either violence or terrorism.

The emergence of the anti-war student movement and the introduction of the protest ideology of the New Left in the United States and Europe, the growth of ethnic extremism all over the globe, the revival of nationalist separatism, and the rediscovery of aggressive religious fundamentalism—all shattered the progressivist theory. The theory was proven wrong not only by the events of the past three decades but also because of its flawed logic. Today we recognize that economic welfare does not automatically resolve emotional conflicts and that religious extremism and modernity are not necessarily incompatible. We also know, perhaps too well, that the complex relationship between democracy and extremism cannot be reduced to the simple equation that historical progress warrants decline in emotions and violence. Ours is a time for the recognition that valid theories about the "stabilization of democracy and consensus" cannot exclude the equally valid theories regarding the "destabilization of democracy and social conflict" for history is never guaranteed to move in one linear direction.⁶² The experience of the postwar era suggests that while several segments of the post-industrial democracy (like the economy and technology) may progress a great deal, other segments can decline or deteriorate contemporaneously. What is called for, insofar as the relationship between democracy and violence is concerned, is a new understanding of a set of principles that govern the logic of the phenomenon I suggest naming the *violentization of democracy*, which is the emergence of processes of radicalization that in time introduce violence and terrorism into this political system. The four most significant maxims tell us that:

(a) No living democracy is perfect. Democracy, in the final analysis, is a limited political arrangement, which, animated by a constitutional ideology of equality and liberty, produces orderly life for a wide variety of individuals and groups differing a great deal in their epistemological and ideological perspectives. As long as the partners to this arrangement are satisfied, they will play according to the rules of the game and be content. But once all, or part of them, are no longer convinced that it works to their advantage, they are likely to change dramatically. Their *predemocratic primordial convictions and conflictual instincts* are likely to surface, and they will not hesitate to radicalize, challenge the system or rival groups, and apply violent means in order to achieve their goals.

(b) No democratic government can either always live up to the principles of freedom and equality that are inscribed in its creed or satisfy all its citizens all the time. This is especially true in a democratic system that is socially or culturally heterogenous. Almost no democracy involved in a serious national or international conflict is capable of applying the same criteria of civilized behavior at home and abroad. The use of a double standard of government, which is quite common, is likely to lead to dissent and harsh criticism on behalf of the aggravated and the hurt. In time, and under specific conditions, it is likely to lead to extremist opposition and violence.

(c) No democratic polity lives in isolation. All the existing democracies are either involved directly in conflicts with non-democratic states or are influenced indirectly by ideological and political turmoils that take place in these systems. The contacts and involvements of democratic states with nondemocratic ones

are often likely to provide attractive non-democratic models of behavior for a wide variety of dissatisfied people. External forms of extremism, violence, and terrorism may in this way be imported into the democratic world in many shapes and structures. All too often these behavioral patterns take root in a democracy, not as a result of external conspiracy, but because they fit the mental and political needs of bitter and unhappy former democrats.

(d) Terrorism is usually not introduced into democracy through an external conspiracy. It is equally not a product of psychopaths, sociopaths or crazy people. Rather, it is in most cases the imperfect nature of democracy—the seamy side of the regime and its surrounding environment—that produces intense conflict, extremism and violence. I suggest naming this form of terrorism *intrademocratic terrorism*. It is basically the extension of opposition politics, one special case of a conflict of legitimacy. It is, furthermore, the behavioral product of a prolonged process of radicalization whose beginning is, almost always, non-violent and non-terroristic. The carrier of the process of radicalization, usually an idealistic and radical movement, starts its career with positive intentions. But as a result of its confrontation with the hard facts of life—including irresponsive governments, hostile rivals, an unfriendly media, and a disinterested public—it may give birth to a violent group. Certain elements within the movement, usually the most idealistic and action-oriented, become impatient with the ordinary procedures and the boring rules of the game. Facing hostility, and perhaps aggression, they start to drift into illicit action, which ultimately leads to *intentional* violence. In the later stages of these processes, their violent acts far exceed those acts of occasional violence that were applied against them. Young, capable, and highly motivated, they engage in terrorism and outdo their rivals. In time they become a great danger to the democratic society in which they live and, quite frequently, a risk to their own parent movement.

The "violentization of democracy," it must be stressed, is neither necessary nor inevitable. It may or may not take place. However, its repeated occurrence in the form of violence-producing processes of radicalization requires that this phenomenon be recognized today as a potential part of the political reality of every democracy.

The Violentization of Israeli Democracy

The study of Gush Emunim, its radicalization, and the emergence of the Temple Mount underground, illustrates the violentization of democracy. Like so many other cases, Jewish terrorism *did not have* to take place but it *did*. And it occurred despite the predictions it would not. Almost no-one thought before or even after the Six-Day War that Israel could produce an internal Jewish violence or terrorism. The Israelis were considered reasonable, pragmatic, secular, and politically non-violent. They have undoubtedly had their share of troubles—political, social, economic, and military—but none of the students of Israeli society believed that these problems had a violent potential. The few exceptions of religious violence in Israel (involving the ultraorthodox community) were not taken seriously. Rather, they were seen as the last gasps of a loser's struggle. Waged against the "heretic" Zionist regime, they signified an anachronistic attempt to reverse history and disqualify the state of Israel.

The post-1967 era proved the old expectations naive and ill-founded. From the perspective of the present study it uncovered two fundamental truths: (a) that Israel's *democratic* system could not be isolated forever from the very *undemocratic* reality of the Arab-Israeli conflict; (b) that religion and extreme religious dreams were not dead in the land.

As for the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the new era showed that the belief that the Israeli society,

or some segments of it, could remain uncontaminated by the bloody and torturous Palestinian question was wishful thinking. Especially naive was the conviction among certain Israeli circles that the settlement of Judea and Samaria could take place with no extra costs to Israel's democracy, and that violence and terrorism were unJewish. Everything that we know today about the violentization of democracy supports the proposition that the appearance of Jewish vigilantism and terrorism was highly probable.

The belief in the decline of religion and spirit of religiosity was also unfounded. The story of Gush Emunim is not simply the tale of the messianic response to the miracle of the Six-Day War. It is as much the story of the profound reaction to the Zionist secularization of a dream 2,000 years old—the dream of Jewish redemption in Eretz Yisrael. As long as the Israeli public spirit was animated by genuine Zionism, the role of religion was marginal. The return to the land did not take place under the command of the rabbis, and Zionism, like other modern nationalist ideologies, had a built-in religious tinge that responded to deep-seated religious needs. But the decline of secular Zionism in the 1950s and 1960s created a huge vacuum. It was just a matter of time before the dormant forces of religion—which remained alive in synagogues, Yeshivot, and religious communities—sought expression and surfaced. The 1967 watershed was a natural opportunity for these forces to erupt. The emergence of Gush Emunim responded to many dormant needs. Many indications suggest that something in this realm could have happened even if the war did not occur.

Jewish terrorism did not have to take place. If Gush Emunim had not pressed the issue of settlement *ad absurdum*, if the government of Israel had been sufficiently determined to restrain this movement in time, if the Palestinians of the West Bank had been more docile, and if many other such "ifs" had not pertained, it is quite possible that this paper would not have been written.

But given the post-1967 conditions, the erosion of Israel's democracy and the emergence of Jewish violence were highly probable: contrary to many unfounded beliefs and theories, no one is immune to violence, not even Israeli Jews. Given the right circumstances, Jews, like Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and pacifists of all origins, are capable of producing violence and of practicing terrorism. If the struggle against terrorism is ever to take a constructive shape, it will have to be founded on the pessimistic assumption that no one, even the best of all people, is immune to this terrible human deviation. For centuries, that kind of violence we have come to call terrorism was considered exceptional, uncommon and unheard of in civilized society. Given what we know today, this may no longer be the case.

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Comments

by Myron J. Aronoff

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Professor Sprinzak has presented us with a fascinating analysis of a case of the development of a domestic terrorist underground in an environment which, until very few years ago, had been considered to be inhospitable to such an organization. Based on his own original research on the Jewish terrorist underground in Israel, Sprinzak raises a number of interesting questions and propositions relating to what he (unhappily) has chosen to call the "violentization" of democracy. In the brief time allotted, I shall attempt to question several aspects of Sprinzak's analysis of the process of radicalization.

Ehud suggests that when an idealistic radical movement confronts "the hard facts of life," characterized by unresponsive governments, hostile rivals, unfriendly media, and a disinterested public, it becomes radicalized. At best, these might be considered necessary but not sufficient causes, since there are ample examples of idealistic radical movements which confronted such conditions and failed to resort to violence and terrorism. However, I suggest that the first, and likely the most important, of these conditions was not present in Israel when the Jewish underground carried out its attacks. According to Sprinzak's own publications, the last factor was clearly absent as well. In fact, the underground associated with certain Gush Emunim settlers engaged in terrorist acts precisely at a time during which the Israeli government and large sectors of the public (the base of the iceberg, to use Sprinzak's metaphor) were most responsive to Gush Emunim. The movement had gained access to the highest levels of the government which was actively implementing its settlement policy. The government had all but co-opted the movement as its ideological vanguard.

The most "moderate" member of the first Likud-led government, Moshe Dayan, resigned in October 1979 when Prime Minister Begin placed the Minister of Interior, Joseph Burg (NRP), in charge of the negotiations over the implementation of autonomy for the Palestinians. This was not just a political slight of Dayan. It signalled Begin's intention to abort the autonomy plan. The leaders of Gush Emunim were overjoyed by Dayan's resignation and his replacement by Yitshak Shamir, a leader of the former Lehi underground (popularly known as the Stern gang). This took place fully six months prior to the bombing of the Palestinian mayors.

Ezer Weizman, the other prominent "moderate" member of the first Likud government, resigned as Minister of Defense toward the end of May 1980, shortly after the murder of the six yeshiva students in Hebron. The Gush Emunim settlers rejoiced at his resignation and were thrilled with the eventual appointment of Arik Sharon, their most reliable patron, to the post after Begin held it himself for a period. By the time the Jewish underground launched its first operation on June 3, 1980, all of the most powerful positions in the government were held by individuals who were strong supporters of Gush Emunim. It cannot be said that the government was unresponsive. The Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces was strongly supportive of Gush Emunim and its settlement policies, as were key settlement officials in the Jewish Agency. The results of the 1981 election resulted in a more militant Likud government dominated by the hawks, Begin, Shamir, and Sharon, and the remaining terrorist acts took place during the tenure of this government.

The apparent paradox, that the underground actually struck at the peak of power and influence of the movement which spawned it, may offer an insight into an alternative explanation. The institutionalization of Gush Emunim resulted in many of its leaders gaining positions in government-subsidized or -supported institutions. As the movement successfully moved from the margins of the political system to the center, its leaders may have appeared to some of the more militant members to have become co-opted into the ruling political establishment. The resort to violence and terrorism may have been motivated in part by a desire to *revitalize* the movement's more radical stance. Although, as Sprinzak notes, there was initial condemnation of the underground among some elements of Gush Emunim, eventually they won the support and even official defense by the movement. The radicals succeeded in forcing the moderates

into a more militant position.

This is a vivid example of the success of a syndrome which I call the *chain reaction of extremism*. In a political system such as Israel's, which encourages a multiplicity of parties within a relatively ideological political culture, there is a tendency for the parties to compete with their closest ideological rivals. In their attempt to establish their separate identity from the nearest rival, more militant positions tend to be taken. This in turn pressures the more moderate party to move toward more extreme positions. This has traditionally been the case with the religious parties. It is possible that within Gush Emunim individuals and groups affiliated with various ultra-nationalist parties, e.g., Techiya, Matzad (Morasha), and Kach, drove one another to greater militancy and extremism. We see a similar phenomena among the Palestinian movements which do not share many of the other features of the Israeli political system, and among whom it is frequently argued that despair and desperation are the causes of their choice of terrorism.

I suggest that the erosion of political authority has led to a crisis of legitimacy in Israeli society which produced the conditions in which the chain reaction of extremism led to the outbreak of terrorism. The erosion of political authority and of the legitimacy of political institutions has been conspicuous during the past decade. Increasing political polarization, which included the exploitation of ethnic hostilities, reached a peak of domestic political violence in the 1981 election campaign. The divisive war in Lebanon, protests and counter-demonstrations, the exploitation of a general sense of national insecurity, widespread verbal violence (e.g., frequent charges of treason), and isolated acts of physical violence and even terror (e.g., the throwing of a hand grenade which killed a young Peace Now activist on February 10, 1983) were conditions which provided a context in which violence became increasingly common and eventually accepted as a way of life. The main theme of the annual meeting of the Israel Criminological Association meeting held on May 5-6, 1983, was "Violence in Israeli Society."

Some attribute the undermining of the rule of law and the acceptance of violence to the military occupation after the 1967 war. Whatever its origins, the erosion of civility and of tolerance—both social and political—produced conditions which were congenial for the growth of violence. The dehumanization of the enemy (e.g., Prime Minister Begin's reference to Palestinian terrorists as "two legged animals" and Chief of Staff Eitan's reference to them as "cockroaches") is always a prelude to his persecution and justifies the use of violence and terror against him. In this regard the highest level of political leadership in the nation set the tone which gave legitimacy to the more extreme measures taken by the underground.

Israeli political culture is extremely fragile. The few symbols and myths of Zionist civil religion which unite all Zionists are not salient for the Israeli (Jewish and Arab) non-Zionists and anti-Zionists. Even among those who consider themselves Zionist, the ideological divisions appear to be more salient than broad cultural themes which unite. For a long period the Labor Party maintained both political and ideological dominance of the political system. The Likud, in spite of concerted efforts to do so, failed to establish either political or ideological dominance. Gush Emunim has attempted to create a new and more satisfying cultural alternative to fill the void. The claim to be reviving traditional cultural patterns (both Zionist and religious) gives Gush Emunim the character of what Wallace has called a revitalization movement.

I find this concept to be more useful than the notion of fundamentalism in understanding important aspects of Gush Emunim. Millenarian and messianic revitalization movements across a wide range of cultures have produced various extreme forms of behavior among their adherents. For example, prophets have convinced their disciples that bullets would be turned into water. Politically inspired revitalization movements, such as the anti-colonial Mau Mau in Kenya, have been particularly noted for their violence. I think the anthropological concept of revitalization movements may aid in the analysis of movements

such as Gush Emunim and may help illuminate the rise of violence and terrorism in contemporary democratic societies.

Comments

by David C. Rapoport

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"Take only ten minutes. No more than ten minutes," Ann Sheffield told me three or four times. I was flying in from the West Coast, and the whole project was quite expensive; so I calculated how much each word would be worth and felt guilty at the thought that I might waste one. I kept remembering how I felt when my mother used to complain, "it's a *shanda* (shame) the way you waste your food," and Ms. Sheffield's desperate concern made me worry in the same way. This is why I have constricted my comments so unnaturally; and I hope, to continue the metaphor, that doesn't give you indigestion.

This is a rich and stimulating paper. The revealed religions have a messianic component which remains latent to everyone most of the time and becomes imminent to some unexpectedly at other times. Ehud Sprinzak very clearly details the circumstances under which messianism became imminent in the case of the Gush Emunim. I am indebted personally to him for that, because I am engaged in a study of messianism and terror and have discovered that the greatest problem is trying to describe how a messianic belief becomes imminent.

There are two parts to this paper: one consists of details specific to the Israeli case, and the other pertains to our general understanding of democracy and violence. I'm not going to evaluate the details of the paper, but I do want to make some comments on questions raised by the paper, particularly in the more general second portion.

Regarding the first part which deals with Israel, two questions should be raised. When we realize the enormous hopes which traditional Judaism associates with the return to the Promised Land, is it possible for Jews to go back without making a belief in messianic transformation imminent? Certainly, this is not the first time a restored Jewish state has faced the problem discussed by Sprinzak. It was experienced two thousand years ago after an earlier exile, and that produced a disastrous struggle which led to the destruction of the Second Temple and a second exile, one lasting two thousand years. I believe the problem may be even more central to the nature of Judaism than Sprinzak has suggested.

The second question relates to the place of the restoration of the Jews in Christian and Islamic eschatology. What we call American fundamentalism is really a form of Christian messianism, and the 67 War stimulated it immensely, just as that war influenced Jewish messianism. The restoration of the Jews,

it was believed, was necessary to the Second Coming. The facts have been documented in Timothy P. Weber's *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*. In Islam there is a tradition (Haddith) which relates to this issue also. After Christ returns, the Moslem messiah (*mahdi*) will follow. My question is, "Does the revival of religious feeling Islam have anything to do with the sense of messianic imminence among Jews and Christians?"—a question which has never been treated as far as I know.

Let me now turn to the second part of the paper, the question about the relations of democracy and violence. It was Norman Angell, I think, who said that in a democracy one substitutes ballots for bullets, and Sprinzak challenges this conventional wisdom, which has become embedded in contemporary political science. Democracy is imperfect, he says, and because it cannot satisfy everybody, it cannot free itself from the possibility of violence. No democratic system can ever eliminate the problem. In this respect, democracy is just like all other political forms; they all experience violence because they are inherently imperfect forms. I agree that no democratic system can permanently exorcise violence. But I am much more pessimistic on this issue than Sprinzak is, because I would argue that there is a special disposition for violence in democratic systems and that democratic systems produce *more* (not an equal amount) violence than their various counterparts.

This arguments rests on two grounds. The first is that in democracy, competition or conflict is stimulated, and that frequently encourages violence; and secondly, a belief in perfection, which is an aspect of the modern democratic ethos, creates a propensity for violence and for terror as well. The two reasons have been developed by two sets of writers who use different sources to make their points.

In the *Federalist Papers*, strangely enough, the first view is represented. Looking at the experiences of the city state, it is argued that democracy invites violence because democracy must have liberty, and liberty stimulates factions which trespass on the rights of others and therefore provoke violent reactions. Hamilton said this in Paper No.9, and he went on to say that it is impossible to study the history of democracy "without feelings of horror and disgust." And Madison in No. 10 said much the same thing, indicating that "Republics have short and violent lives." Still, they both argued that when republics did work, they worked better than all other forms did; and they said that there was a way to get the advantages of popular government without incurring the disadvantages.

What was the solution? Well, you know what the solution was; separation of power, federalism, representative government, and a good deal of physical space, which all previous democracies which were tiny ones did not have. These devices or circumstances would moderate conflict or check it before it would become violent.

The question then was "Was the solution a democratic one?" Certainly, the anti-Federalists did not think that this was a democratic solution to a democratic problem. And others who thought deeply on the issue agreed. Sir Henry Maine, for example, a 19th century English conservative political theorist, said that the ideas behind the institutions of the separation of powers, federalism and representation, were taken over from the federal system, whose ethos was designed to guarantee liberty and privilege and as such was antithetical to the spread of democratic principles. Because of those restraints, America, he claimed, in the middle of the 19th century was the most *undemocratic* country in the world! In a century or so that fact would become self-evident. In the meantime, we must regard France as the epitome of the democratic experience. France introduced the reign of terror to the modern world, and wherever French principles were spread, Maine argued, a kind of persistent violence seemed to characterize the political system. Why? Democracy produced an *unsatiable* desire to attack privilege, and most governments which have absorbed French principles would manifest this perpetual violence. Now he had in mind not only what had happened in France between the Revolution and Louis Napoleon, but he was looking at Spain, at Latin America, and was thinking of the future of what we call the third world. The persistence of the military uprisings were essentially related to the spread of democratic principles.

It is a fair question to ask whether the spread of democratic principles has brought more rather than less violence? If it has brought more, are we entitled to believe that the condition will persist? I can't answer the question here, but I can say that if you look at the history of the third world in particular, ballots are not substitutes for bullets, ballots produce bullets. The coups and the violence normally occur before elections, during elections, and after elections. If you want to know when the next coup is likely to occur, find out when the next election will be.

How about our own country? We have little violence associated with elections and on the whole very little political violence. Still, when we describe elections, we use an extraordinary number of military metaphors. We talk about campaigns, about strategy and tactics, and about mobilizing the public. We speak of parties which have a cadre in them, which is supplemented by volunteers. Areas which strongly support particular candidates are citadels, etc. If you went through the newspaper and systematically looked at the metaphors that we use to describe politics in a democratic country, you would be entitled to wonder whether we're describing politics or war. Psychologists might say this is sublimation, what we're really doing is preventing ourselves from fighting by engaging in these activities which restrain us and don't really produce violence. I remember using a version of this myself when I contended that the English passion for sports was an important reason why they developed their extraordinary respect for rules and keep violence at bay. But after watching the English at soccer matches recently, and remembering that European countries have banned English teams, I'm not so sure anymore. In any case, there may be a difference between short—and long—run effects of such sublimations.

The first general point is that democracy breeds conflict, it inflames internal hostilities, it fans pugnacious emotions. It creates issues sometimes when no issue exists, because that is the only way for an aspiring politician to get ahead. The second point I want to make, however, is very different. It is usually made by different scholars who, on the whole, ignore the initial point. Their argument is that modern democracy, more than any other system, creates hopes that complete perfection in this world is possible. (Hope, incidentally Hobbes tells us, is much more essential to revolutionary violence than discontent is. Hope really fueled the Gush. It was the hope produced by the 1967 War, and then the little frustration that took place after the 1967 War. But it was the hope, not the frustration, which opened up the new vision.)

Talmon, an Israeli whom you all know, first made this argument about perfection and democracy in three splendid, impossible-to-read volumes on political messianism. Talmon thinks that the French Revolution is source of this phenomenon. More recently, a similar argument was developed in a brilliant study by the Center's director, James Billington (*Fire in the Minds of Men: The Origin of the Revolutionary Faith*). Incidentally, considering the extraordinary length of his own monumental study, Professor Billington, who is with us tonight, could not object to my taking eleven or twelve minutes instead of the ten allotted. Billington argues that the desire for perfection is represented by a secular revolutionary tradition which has persisted since the French Revolution. That tradition seems to manifest in a kind of cyclical fashion, and in this respect it resembles the messianic phenomenon which has latent and imminent phases. But Billington's great work has a flaw, as far as the topic at hand is concerned; he says in a footnote, and he really writes enormously erudite footnotes, that there really is no connection between religious messianism and our secular revolutionary tradition. I don't think he is right. I believe there is a close, very persistent connection between these two hopes, and that both of these things are related to democracy.

But my alarm has rung, and Ms. Sheffield is looking at me. I will conclude by reiterating that Sprinzak's very perceptive original paper is too modest in its final assessment of violence. Democracy is not the equal of systems in producing violence. It breeds more internal violence than any other system does. It breeds it for two reasons; the classical argument based on the evidence of history is that it encourages conflict, and the more modern argument based on the special experience of the French Revolution is that it produces a promise for perfection. When you have a belief that perfection is possible, terror will follow soon. And on this point, democracy and the quest for perfection, Dr. Sprinzak ought to read Billington's

book, and Professor Billington ought to consider whether Dr. Sprinzak's paper has said anything that might make him change his mind on one important feature of the revolutionary faith.

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 34. Y. Etzion, *Temple Mount* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: E. Caspi [private publisher], 1985), 2.
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60. Cf. Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (New York: 1963) *Postscript*.

61. The first essay that started the long list of "secularization writings in the academic domain of political science was Gabriel Almond's "Comparative Political Systems," *The Journal of Politics* (August 1956).

62. While the systematic literature on terrorism leaves much to be desired, the study of social conflict, collective action and political violence has achieved, in the last twenty years, great sophistication and theoretical rigor. The propositions advanced in this section are based on this theoretical corpus which is best represented by: S. M. Barnes, M. Kaase, et al., *Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies* (Beverly Hills: Russel Sage, 1979); H. Ekstein (ed.), *Internal War* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964); W. A. Gamson, *Power and Discontent* (Homewood: Dorsey, 1968) and *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Homewood: Dorsey, 1975); T. R. Garr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); T. R. Garr et al., *Rogues, Rebels and Reformers: A Political History of Urban Crime and Conflict* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1979); E. N. Muller, *Agressive Political Participation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); A. Obershall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1973); C. Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1978); S. Verba, N. Nie and J. Kim, *Participation and Political Equality* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

Web Editor's Note

This document has been edited slightly to conform to American stylistic, punctuation and hypertext conventions. No further changes to the text have been made.

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