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Unconscious Aspects of the Arab–Israeli Conflict

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Most experts agree that the Arab–Israeli conflict is the most intractable in the modern world (cf. Friedman 1989, Reich, 1991). Its violence and persistence have defied rational analysis. The Middle-East Peace Conference brokered by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, which opened on October 30, 1991, in Madrid, Spain, and the Washington talks that followed, are not considered likely to produce a peace treaty any time soon. The irrational obstacles, resistances and fears on both sides are so great that the negotiations are expected to break down at any time. The Iranian Shiite leaders and Palestinian Arab extremists have held a War Conference calling for *jihad* against Israel.

While rationalistic views of the conflict by political scientists focus on the conscious aspects of territorial claims and nationalisms, psychoanalytic views of the strife have raised the unconscious issues of group self, defensive group narcissism, historical hurts, narcissistic injury, denial, projection, splitting, externalization, and lack of empathy. Although all of these unconscious processes do play a vital role in the conflict, I believe that *a still more powerful role is played by the inability to mourn historical losses on both sides*. I review the psychohistorical and psychopolitical literature on the conflict and attempt to support my thesis with evidence from Jewish and Arab historiography.

Despite its obvious conscious causes, the bloody Palestinian Arab *intifada* (uprising) raging in the Israeli-occupied territories and in Israel

itself since late 1987 may also have to do with the displacement of rage from within the Palestinian Arab refugee family to the Israelis, and with the Palestinian Arab struggle for a sense of self-worth. I analyze the dynamics of the Arab refugee family and their relationship to the conflict.

Finally, rationalistic Israeli political scientists, historians, international relations scholars, and Arabists often vehemently object to the application of psychoanalysis to their disciplines; they see this as an invasion. Their attitude is actually ambivalent. They display both an attraction to and a fear of psychoanalysis. This resistance and ambivalence have many grounds, conscious and unconscious, which I discuss at the end of this chapter.

PSYCHOHISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The early Zionists did not take the Arab Question in Palestine very seriously. Most of them ignored the reality of the Arab population of Palestine. Their famous slogan was *A Land Without a People* for *a People Without a Land.* Like their ancestors for many centuries, they regarded the Ottoman backwater of Palestine as the Land of the Jews and called it by the Biblical name of *The Land of Israel.* This name implied that Palestine was still the ancient Land of the Jews and did not harbor hundreds of thousands of non-Jews. Indeed, the early Zionists were blind to the existence of the Arabs (Laqueur, 1972, pp. 209–210).

The psychoanalytic term for this kind of blindness is *denial.* It is a defensive process that we develop in our infancy. The denial of reality was current among the 19th-century Christian Zionists as well. The Pre-Raphaelite English painter William Holman Hunt visited Palestine in 1854 to receive inspiration for his religious illustrations of the Life of Jesus Christ. He argued that the Arabs were the drawers of water and hewers of wood for the Jews, as were the Biblical Gibeonites (Joshua 9). It was therefore unnecessary to displace them from Palestine. "They don't even have to be dispossessed, for they would render the Jews very useful services," wrote Hunt (Elon, 1975, p. 179). The Arabs could do all the menial labor and serve the Chosen People. Arab-Jewish relations would be fine when each side knew its proper place.

Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, imagined Palestine as an orderly, beautiful, cultured, lush, green land like Austria or Switzerland, with German as the language of the land and with the Central European way of life. When Herzl visited Jerusalem in 1898 to see the German emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm II, he was so appalled by the sight of Jerusalem that he wanted to tear down the entire filthy city and

replace it with a new one patterned after Vienna. From the psychoanalytic viewpoint, these *psychogeographical fantasies* (Stein and Niederland, 1989) betrayed the denial and idealization that propelled them. Earlier Herzl had had fantasies of solving the Jewish Question in Austria by fighting duels with leading anti-Semitic leaders such as Lueger and Schönerer or by leading the Jews into mass conversion to Christianity in Vienna's St. Stephen's Cathedral (Falk, forthcoming).

Other Zionists were obsessed with turning arid Palestine into a green land of plenty. Leo Motzkin, one of the early Zionist leaders, was sent to Palestine in April 1898, following the First Zionist Congress, by the Zionist Executive to investigate the conditions of the handful of Jews then living there. Motzkin wrote the Executive that the most fertile parts of Palestine were settled by some 650,000 Arabs and that innumerable violent confrontations between Jews and Arabs had already taken place. He added, however, that the number of Arabs had not been verified, and that Palestine was basically a colorful mixture of desert, tourism, pilgrims, and East and West. Motzkin had exaggerated both the number of violent confrontations and his idyllic portrait of Palestine. Despite his accounts of violence in Palestine, both he and other Zionist envoys *wished to believe* that the Jews had nothing to fear in *their* land (Laqueur, 1972, p. 211).

The Zionist belief that Palestine was *The Land of the Jews* expressed a *wish* rather than reality. It was a belief in the *right* of the Jews to the Land of Israel, yet it led the Zionists to act as if in fact that land was theirs by right. This was, to say the least, exaggerated, in 1898. The early Zionists thought that if the Christian Arabs of Palestine were anti-Zionists, the Muslim Arabs were potentially friendly. They ignored the warnings of Arthur Ruppin and others in Palestine itself who argued that the Muslim Arabs were still more hostile to the Jews than the Christian ones. Most Zionists lived in Europe, whence they could imagine Palestine as they wished. To them moving to Palestine was an *aliyah* (ascent), as if Palestine were some heavenly land, higher than all other countries. The first *aliyah* took place from 1881 to 1904, and no more than a couple of hundred Jews came to Palestine. The second *aliyah,* from 1905 to 1914, brought some 40,000 Jews to Ottoman Palestine. There was a great turnover among them.

Elias Auerbach, an early Zionist who settled in Palestine during the second *aliyah,* published an article in the German-language Zionist paper *Die Welt* in which he argued that the Arabs owned Palestine by virtue of their being the majority there. He added that the Arabs would remain the owners because of their natural population increase. In 1931 Auerbach wrote that it had been a fatal Zionist error to ignore the Arabs at the

outset, but added that even had the Zionists taken the Arabs into account it would not have changed matters, because the Arabs were hostile to the Jews in Palestine and would remain so no matter how nicely the Jews treated them.

Mandel (1976) thought that the Arab–Israel conflict is rooted in the years preceding the First World War at the end of the Ottoman period. Arab anti-Zionism was born between the rise to power of the Young Turks in 1908 and the beginning of the Great War in 1914. During the League of Nations (later United Nations) British Mandate over Palestine (1920–1948) a violent conflict raged between the Jewish community of Palestine and the Palestinian Arabs, whose anti-Zionism became ever fiercer. Laqueur (1972) believed that the bitterness of the Arab peasants *(fellaheen)* toward the Jews sprang from their being forced to sell their lands to the Jews and from the Jews refusing to share their grazing fields with the Arabs, as had been the custom earlier. When an Arab sold his lands to another Arab, he could still have his cattle graze in his former land, which the Jews refused to let him do. The Jews displayed an amazing *lack of empathy* for Arab feelings.

We can thus detect two major problems on the Jewish side of the conflict from the outset of political Zionism: 1. A *denial* by the Zionists of the existence of the Arabs in Palestine and of the Arab hostility to Zionism; and 2. A Jewish *lack of empathy* for Arab feelings, the Jewish inability to comprehend the feelings of the Arabs and to adapt themselves to Arab ways.

The Zionist denial of reality followed centuries of denial by the Jews of their own history. Yerushalmi (1982) has shown that the Jews had denied their painful history from the first century, following the destruction of the Second Temple, all the way to the 16th century, following their expulsion from the Iberian peninsula. *During those 15 centuries there was no real Jewish chronological historiography.* All Jewish and Hebrew literature, religious and secular, was ahistoric and anachronistic. I advance a psychoanalytic interpretation of this astounding fact in the following section.

LONGING FOR THE PAST

Zionism was a yearning to turn back the wheel of time, the clock of history, to restore to the Jews their great losses. The Zionists wished to restore those historical losses, to be reborn in the ancient motherland or fatherland. They wished to revolutionize Jewish life and to make sure that the Jewish future was not like the past, yet they longed for past

glories at the same time. To them the alternative to Jewish rebirth in Palestine was the extinction of the Jewish people or the continued existence of the Jews in a state of insecurity, vulnerability, and indignity. Yet the obvious, real alternative to Palestine was America, where some 2.5 million Jews migrated from Russia and elsewhere between 1880 and 1914. Only 40,000 Jews came to Palestine at the same time.

From the psychoanalytic viewpoint the Zionist longing was like that of a child for its split-off Great Good Early Mother, which exists only in the child's fantasy (Gonen, 1975). The infant, unable to reconcile the pleasant and painful aspects of its mother, splits her off into an all-good mother and all-bad one. The adult continues to idealize his "mother-land." Those who came to settle in Palestine longed for a new life in a new motherland flowing with milk and honey. They certainly did not wish to find brothers or cousins in Palestine who would be their rivals for the love of their ideal motherland.

The fact that Zionism has been eminently successful at altering Jewish reality by creating first the Jewish community of Palestine and then the State of Israel does not mean that Zionism did not involve defensive psychological processes. The Zionist denial of the reality of the Arabs was a defensive, unconscious mental process, and we Israelis have paid a very high and tragic price for it. When the Arabs reacted with rage and violence to the Zionists' ignoring them and attempting to build a Jewish homeland in what they regarded as *their* country, the idealistic Zionists became enraged and violent in their turn at this Arab assault, which seemed to them so utterly vicious and unjustified.

Many scholars argue that the Arabs would never have accepted a Jewish state in Palestine, whatever the Zionist empathy or lack thereof for their feelings. Yet the Arabs, or at least Egypt and the P.L.O., have (partially) already recognized Israel, whereas Israel has refused to recognize the P.L.O. As a result of the mutual lack of recognition and empathy a violent, murderous conflict has been going on between us and the Arabs for over a century. In fact, many of us Israelis still tend to deny the reality of the Arabs and of their deep hostility for us. This is obvious in the "Jordan is Palestine" fantasies of the extreme nationalist right-wing parties that wish to transfer the Palestinian Arabs to Jordan (Sprinzak, 1989).

.THE ARAB DENIAL OF REALITY

The Zionist denial of reality is by no means the only cause of the conflict. Laroui (1976) pointed out the extreme distortions of Arab historiogra-

phy. Classical Arab historiography was dominated by Islamic religious thought, its seeming objectivity and emotional neutrality masking an inability to comprehend the past in its historical continuity and complexity. Every event of Arab history had to conform with the sayings of the Prophet and no event existed in its own right. This classical religious distortion was compounded by the modern nationalistic and ideological Arab historiographic tendentiousness, which attempts to interpret all the Arab failures, defeats, and losses as due to the diabolical plots of non-Arab nations. Arab historiography, then, betrays massive denial, isolation, and idealization.

The Arabs have been denying their great losses for the past 500 years. As the Arabs see it, they had a great empire comprising the entire Middle East, North Africa, and Spain from the 7th to the 15th century. In reality this was an Islamic rather than an Arab empire. Moreover, it was far from united. There were perennial wars between tribes, clans, sects, and dynasties in the Muslim world. The rulers of Muslim Spain were primarily Moors or Berbers, not Arabs. History and geography, however, are in the minds of the beholder.

In the minds of fundamentalist Muslims, and of many Arabs, the glory of the Muslim Caliphate was lost and needs to be restored. Between 1453 and 1541 the Ottoman Turks conquered the entire Byzantine empire, the Arab world, and the Muslim Caliphate. In 1492 the Muslim Moors were finally defeated and expelled from Spain by the Christians, after seven centuries of ruling what they called *Al-Andalus.* The psychogeographical entity that the Muslims called *Dar al-Islam* had been lost to the Arabs. Many Arabs still wish to turn back the historical clock and restore the medieval Arab glory. They are searching for the elusive "Arab unity." The Arabs have similarly refused to accept their defeats by Israel.

The Palestinian Arabs experienced their 1948 defeat by Israel as an expulsion from an imaginary heaven. The Arab writer Arif al-Arif called Palestine the *Paradise Lost.* For many years the Arabs denied the very existence of Israel and of its capital Jerusalem. They called Israel "occupied Palestine" or "the Zionist government of Tel-Aviv." These psychogeographical fantasies were a psychological reality that helped make the conflict intractable.

The lack of empathy is a two-way street. Whereas the old Jewish community of Palestine was *sephardic,* spoke Spanish, Turkish and Arabic, and got on rather well with the Arabs under Ottoman rule, the Zionist immigrants of the first and second *aliyah* displayed an amazing insensitivity to the emotional makeup of the Arabs they met in Palestine. The Jews could not and would not comprehend Arab customs. They

were self-centered, with profound *individual and group narcissism.* Given the great traumata of Jewish history, some Jewish group narcissism could well be expected, as I explain later. The lack of empathy led to many a violent quarrel.

THREE THEORETICAL MODELS OF THE CONFLICT

Zonis and Offer (1985) argued that there was nothing inherent to either Judaism or Islam that would cause such an intractable conflict. They distinguished three models for understanding this conflict: the *national–character* model, the *psychopathology* model, and the *self-system* model, based on the concepts of Heinz Kohut.

The *national–character* model includes various studies of Arab and Israeli character that look for a modal Arab or Israeli personality. We shall examine these studies below. Zonis and Offer criticize this model, saying that the studies cited do not examine specific individuals over extended periods of time, ignore other effects on behavior, lack a systematic examination of the correspondence between personality and other behavioral characteristics, do not test the distribution of character traits among individuals, and ignore the unconscious dynamics of character structure. Zonis and Offer believe that the national–character model is inappropriate for understanding the Arab–Israeli conflict and that the relationship between national character and leadership in the Arab world and in Israel has not been studied. The leader–follower relationship is highly complex and involves deep, unconscious aspects beyond any national character.

As for the *psychopathology* model, we have known about the intimate relationship between political leadership and emotional disorders for some time (see Robins, 1977). Zonis and Offer (1985) argue that there are many leaders in the Middle East who suffer from mental disorders. The late Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, for example, used to talk about the Arab attitude to Israel in terms borrowed directly from the Nazi holocaust. Begin described Yasir Arafat in Beirut as analogous to Hitler in his Berlin bunker. After meeting an American diplomat, Begin hummed a song of the Jewish victims at Auschwitz that said that the Germans could kill the Jews in body but not in spirit. He was living in the past, say Zonis and Offer.

We should be cautious about making such pronouncements of psychopathology about political leaders lest political psychology, psy-

chiatry, and psychoanalysis be blamed for wielding themselves as political weapons rather than as illuminating theories. Zonis and Offer (1985) argued that there are severe emotional problems on the Arab side as well as on the Israeli one. The British treated their Arab colonies contemptuously, and the Arabs may have internalized this treatment as a self-image. The Palestinian Arab terrorists try to change their self-image. The Palestinians are the most humiliated and neglected of Arabs. Arafat, with his unshaven, slovenly garb and shabby appearance, symbolizes this Palestinian self-image. It is interesting to examine whether Arafat's dress has changed since Palestinian independence was declared. The P.L.O. terrorists wish to present the Palestinians as strong and heroic because they feel themselves to be weak, oppressed, poor, and downtrodden. Zonis and Offer cited the case of Fawaz Turki, a Palestinian Arab terrorist who hated himself and the entire world. The problem goes back to our feelings about ourselves.

THE PROBLEM OF THE SELF

Zonis and Offer feel that the *self-system* model is the most useful one for understanding the Arab-Israeli conflict. They examine the group self as well as the individual self, as Moses (1982) had done. Following Kohut, they distinguished four types of leaders: wise, impulsive, megalomaniacal, and messianic. For example, the Egyptian president Anwar as-Sadat was a wise leader, the Israeli prime minister Begin and the Libyan president Muammar Qadhafi were impulsive leaders, the last Shah Reza Pahlavi of Iran was a megalomaniacal leader, and the late Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran was a messianic leader. Zonis and Offer argue that leaders have a great influence on the Arab-Israeli conflict and should be studied.

Zonis and Offer argue that the Arab-Israeli conflict is actually four distinct subconflicts: the interstate conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Palestinian-Arab conflict, and the internal conflicts within Israel and the Palestinians. The nature of these subconflicts keeps changing dramatically. The GAP report of 1978 (discussed later) similarly argued that the narcissistic system of each party to the conflict keeps changing. The Israeli-Egyptian peace is a case in point. Each side has many internal problems and is far from monolithic. To understand the conflict, one must grasp the internal emotional reality of each side, not only the external reality. Zonis and Offer believe that historical processes are leading to a lessening of the narcissistic injuries, an improvement of the self-image, and a more realistic perception of reality on both sides. If

we have leaders who can rise above their own social and political culture and find new solutions to old problems, peace is bound to come, say Zonis and Offer.

The concept of self is central to the new psychoanalysis of Heinz Kohut (1978), which became prominent in the last two decades. It is similar to Erikson's concept of *ego identity* yet different from it. Kohut purposely refrained from defining the self, but it seems to include all our feelings and attitudes to ourselves and our internalized self-image. Our self is formed during the second year of our life, when we separate and individuate from our mother and begin to sense ourselves as an entity distinct from her. Narcissism is an emotional state of great investment of feeling in the self. Narcissistic injury is damage to the self, to our self-image, self-esteem, self-love, and pride. Kohut has published many books and articles on the disturbances of the self and on their psycho-analytic treatment.

Psychoanalysts argue about the issue of the grandiose self, which may simply be called an inflated self-image. In extreme, pathological cases it becomes megalomania. Kernberg (1980) believes that the grandiose self is a pathological development of the self caused by serious difficulties in the psychic development of the infant and child. Kohut (1978) regarded the grandiose self as a normal structure in the development of the self, a stage of the development that we must pass through and emerge from. Moses (1982), from his experience with families, agrees with Kohut that the grandiose self may be shared by all members of a family. He believes that each of us has a grandiose self hidden within us, both as individuals and as groups.

THE GROUP SELF

Each human group we belong to, beginning with our family of origin and ending with our nation, plays an important emotional role for us. It not only holds us, giving us a feeling of security, but also helps us define our identity and our self, the boundaries between the me and the not-me, who we are, and what we are. In this sense, each group unconsciously replaces our early mother, and our feelings about it are largely deter-mined by our relationship with our mother during the early phases of symbiosis (fusion) and of separation, individuation, and differentiation, when our self is formed.

Each group has its psychological boundaries that determine who belongs to it and who does not. The Israeli Law of Return of 1950 defines

the limits of the imaginary group we Israelis alternately call *The Jewish People* and *The People of Israel* and imagine to be based in Israel. We maintain and defend the boundaries of our group very jealously. The less our internal and personal boundaries are clear and secure, the more we need a clear demarcation of the secure boundaries of our group. The geopolitical boundaries of our country unconsciously represent our own internal and interpersonal boundaries (Falk, 1974, 1983). The Israeli *Border Guard* is not just a police force, it also expresses a deep emotional need. The group language, religion, culture, history, and mythology help transmit from one generation to the next the sense of belonging to the in-group and of being different from all out-groups. The unacceptable aspects of the group are externalized upon neighboring out-groups.

Kohut (1972), in his well-known essay on narcissistic rage, coined the term *group self*. He returned to this subject in later works (Kohut, 1976). The group self is a key concept to the psychoanalytic view of the Arab–Israeli conflict, embodying as it does our feelings about ourselves as an ethnic, national, and religious group. The myth of election, the belief that we are a Chosen People, or that the Jews throughout the world are one people, the People of Israel, is part of our group self. The name *Israel* was originally an attribute of the Canaanite father-god El, meaning "El shall reign" (Cross, 1973).

Winnik, Moses, and Ostow (1973) discussed denial in the Arab–Israeli conflict. Despite the obvious aggressive feelings mobilized in soldiers by the fighting and killing, Ruth Jaffe, an Israeli analyst, pointed out that an Israeli book on soldiers' feelings during the Six-Day War of 1967 did not even include the word aggression. This book at the same time ignored the issue of the self. We now recognize that the issue of the group self is central to our conflict.

THE GRANDIOSE GROUP SELF

Gonen (1978) wrote that after the Six–Day War of 1967 we Israelis saw ourselves as much bigger and stronger than we were in reality, and that it was this dangerous and tragic illusion that brought about the disaster known as the Yom Kippur War of 1973. In psychoanalytic terms this illusion is called the *grandiose group self*. The exaggerated, grandiose self-image of an ethnic or religious group can be fatal. It is caused by an unconscious mental process designed to protect us from painful feelings of inferiority, worthlessness, helplessness, and nonexistence.

The grandiose group self is expressed in our infantile attitude to our

family, then displaced to our nursery school, kindergarten, grade school, class, youth movement, adolescent group, military unit, employer, university or hospital department, and any other reference group. The residents of Jerusalem believe that their city is much more beautiful, better, and bigger than Tel-Aviv, while those of Tel-Aviv believe there is no city like theirs in Israel, perhaps not in the whole world. The professors at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem believe themselves to be several ranks above those of all other universities in Israel. Many Israelis imagine their country is the best, most beautiful, strongest, most important, and most sacred in the entire world; it is the Holy Land, the Land of Milk and Honey. Jerusalem has been idealized as perhaps no other city in the entire world has (Falk, 1987).

A child needs to idealize; an adult person is able to see reality for what it is. Although Israel is a country of significant military power, allied with the United States and with strong ties to world Jewry, it is still a tiny land in the Middle East, its military power is limited, it is economically weak, lives beyond its means, and depends on the United States and world Jewry for its economic and military survival. Israel is troubled by grave social, economic, political, and security problems, with a long and interesting but far from glorious past. Israel may be a special place, but we Israelis certainly are neither the Chosen People nor a Light Unto the Nations, as many Israelis, especially the nationalistic, religious, and right-wing parties believe (Safran, 1978).

When Israeli premier David Ben-Gurion proclaimed *The Third Kingdom of Israel* on November 7, 1956, after the Israeli army had captured Sinai, he was expressing his grandiose personal self, which he had fused with the grandiose group self, the group narcissism of the Israelis. The following day Ben-Gurion had to sober up from his narcissistic inebriation when U.S. President Dwight David Eisenhower and other angry world leaders threatened him with the cutoff of aid and with military intervention. After a severe personal crisis lasting 24 hours Ben-Gurion announced with deep pain, grief, and disappointment that the Israeli army was going to withdraw from the Sinai. Israeli group narcissism was reinforced by the spectacular Israeli victory in the Six–Day War of 1967.

The Yom Kippur War of 1973 sent emotional shock waves throughout Israeli society. We were forced to sober up, to give up our illusions of omnipotence (Gonen, 1978). It was precisely such illusions that led to the failure of Israeli intelligence to foresee the coming Arab attack in 1973. The 1977 visit of Egyptian President Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat and the peace process that followed and culminated in the Egyptian-Israeli

peace treaty of 1979 reduced our tendency to project all evil on our enemies. It is no accident that this sobering-up process was followed by scholarly reassessments of Jewish national heroes such as Bar Kochba, the second-century leader of the Jewish uprising against Rome, that showed them to be the worst military catastrophes in our history (Harkabi, 1983). The disillusionment and the attack on Israeli national myths were interconnected.

Reality had forced us Israelis to modify our grandiose group self and to see ourselves life-size. *The grandiose self and narcissism, whether personal or national, develop as defenses against deep, painful feelings of helplessness and worthlessness.* It may seem absurd to attribute to the proud Israelis unconscious feelings of worthlessness. We know, however, that pride, especially arrogance, masks precisely such feelings. The Jews, who lost their motherland and suffered from terrible persecutions, massacres, and humiliations over many centuries, culminating in the Nazi Holocaust, as well as the Arabs, who lost their glorious Caliphate in the 15th century and were under Ottoman and colonial rule for several centuries, have weighty historical reasons for feeling inferior, helpless, worthless, and narcissistically injured.

We Israelis like to hark back to our glorious biblical past and to boast of our great achievements during the past century. We seem to be trapped in our own national narcissism, in our myth of election as the Chosen People, in our grandiose group self, which is an unconscious defense against feelings of historical defeat and failure. The Arabs like to hark back to the glorious past of *Dar al-Islam,* of having conquered half the world during the seventh and eighth centuries, of having invented mathematics, of the victories of Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi (Saladin) over the Crusaders. The fact that Tariq az-Ziyad, who conquered Spain, was a Berber and that Saladin was a Kurd does not seem to interfere with visions of past glory. It may be asserted that national narcissism in the Middle East is pathological and dangerous.

THE GROUP SELF AND THE CONFLICT

The Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry in the United States, known by its acronym of GAP, has been studying social, political, and historical issues in our lives for many years. The GAP has a Committee on International Relations (C.I.R). Between 1972 and 1977 the members of GAP's C.I.R. conducted numerous interviews with Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs. At the end of its interviews and deliberations C.I.R.

published a report on *Self-Involvement in the Middle East Conflict* (Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, 1978). The main thesis of the GAP report was that a major portion of the Arab–Israeli conflict derived from problems each side had with its own group self and from each side's attempt to repair severe narcissistic injuries to its self.

According to this report our land, nation, country, and state are part of our *extended self.* Damage to our country is felt as damage to our own self. *Each side feels and believes that its hurts were caused by the other side but in reality is also mired in a conflict with its own self.* The group narcissism of each side is badly injured, and each side strives to repair its own self-image. The GAP report put forth a new idea in the psychoanalytic theory of war, in that it searches for the root cause of the conflict in the internal conflicts of each side, not in external circumstances.

Moses and Bene-Moses (1980) discussed the emotional obstacles to an Arab–Israeli peace treaty. They pointed out the processes of projection, denial, and the compulsive repetition of past traumata as the most serious obstacles. The denial of reality and the living in the past occur on both sides. Moses (1982) stressed the issue of the group self and the abundance of narcissistic phenomena in this conflict. He was aware of the fact that a scholar who seeks to explore the unconscious mind of his own national group is courting trouble. When Moses showed the draft of his article to an old colleague, the latter became upset, telling Moses it was antisemitic.

Moses (1982) pointed out that all unconscious defensive processes, such as repression, denial, isolation, projection, and splitting, have narcissistic aspects, because they are designed to protect our sense of self. When we externalize upon others that which we cannot bear in ourselves, we feel good, pure, and just, whereas the enemy seems bad, polluted, and evil. When the ancient Hebrews sent the scapegoat down the mountain slope to its death, they felt relieved. When the other is the enemy, this process becomes intensified.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF NATIONALISM?

Nationalism is one of the great afflictions of our species. It has led to terrible human catastrophes. We know that nationalism is in our mind (Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, 1987) but we do not know how to cure ourselves of it. Moses (1982) distinguished two types of nationalism. Following Kohut, he labeled healthy nationalism *patriotism* and the pathological type *Chauvinism.* Healthy identification with our

national group must not be confounded with pathological fusion with it. The distinction between patriotism and Chauvinism, however, raises both a semantic and a psychological problem. The word *nation* derives from the Latin word *natio* (birth), while the word *patriotism* derives from the Latin word *pater* (father). The Romans called their country *patria,* the Germans call theirs *das Vaterland,* and the French call their country *la mère-patrie* (the mother-fatherland). Nationalism involves the strong feeling that our own nation is unique, better than other nations, and worth laying down our lives for.

Because the nation is part of our extended self and plays the unconscious role of our Early Mother (Volkan, 1979, 1988), nationalism is in any event an immature feeling by its very nature. The key question involves the nature of the feelings fueling nationalism. Moses (1982) argued that the terrorists of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and even more so those of the still more extreme and fanatical terror groups, suffer from very pathological group narcissism and grandiose selves. National group narcissism, from nationalism, patriotism, and chauvinism to Fascism and Nazism, may result from an unconscious *displacement* of the personal narcissism of each of the individuals belonging to the group onto the national group, and of an identification with the group as a mirror image of one's own grandiose self. After the Six-Day War, when Israel suddenly quadrupled in size, some Israelis *personally* felt bigger and stronger.

NATIONALISM AND THE SELF

Mack (1983) wrote that the emotional hurts and the victimization of the parties to the Arab–Israeli conflict have played a key role in its turning into a chronic one. The lack of empathy on both sides is another factor. At the heart of the tragedy lies the refusal of the Arab leaders to recognize Israel and of the Israeli leaders to recognize the Palestinians. Each side is fixated on its own historical hurts. Our national group is the largest and most abstract of all the groups to which we belong. We jealously guard its ethnic and geographic boundaries. The Myth of Election of most tribes and nations claim that our people is the chosen one. We Israelis feel that our Holy Land is incomparably beautiful and glorious. We think that our army is not only the best and strongest in the Middle East but that it is also among the best and strongest in the whole world. Between the Six–Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973 we felt like a regional power, if not a superpower. Moses thinks the

Israeli army is the most important, most central, and most sensitive vehicle of our national narcissism and of our grandiose group self, along with the national flag, the national anthem, the government, and the *Knesset* (legislature). The victories of the Israeli army in the wars of 1948, 1956, and 1967 reinforced our grandiose self.

Nationalism is basically defensive group narcissism. Our national group unconsciously plays the role of the Great Early Mother figure reflecting our own self. Just as the infant feels its mother as part of itself, and lives in fusion with her, so we all feel ourselves to be part of our nation and vice versa. The big question is the *degree* of emotional fusion of individuals with their nation. The more one is fixated in one's early emotional development, symbiotically tied to one's early mother, the more one is likely to be a Chauvinist, fuse oneself emotionally with one's nation, and idealize its power and glory, just as the little child idealizes its mother or father.

THE NEED FOR ENEMIES

Volkan (1979) published a fascinating study of the Greek–Turkish conflict in his native Cyprus. As we shall see, many of the points he made about that conflict are valid for the Arab–Israeli one. Volkan (1988) also published a very important book on our need for enemies and allies. The need for enemies derives from the process of externalization and projection. Our enemy serves as a projective container for all the bad, unacceptable aspects of our self.

Externalization is a defensive process that develops earlier than *projection*. The infant externalizes the painful parts of itself, imagining them to exist in the outside world. Later the child projects upon others its own forbidden feelings or drives, imagining others to harbor them. When I was a child growing up in Tel-Aviv, the Jewish adults around us told us that Arabs were mean and dirty and that we Jews were good and clean. The process of *splitting* and externalization is clear. Each side splits up its world into good and bad, Us and Them, externalizing upon the enemy everything it cannot bear in itself and projecting upon the enemy its own bad feelings. The actual behavior of the enemy may reinforce one's image of that enemy, but the defensive process distorts our feelings.

The need for enemies is also clear from the violent internal wars that beset each party to the Middle East conflict. The Arab world is riven by bloody conflicts between Muslims and Christians; between Sunnis, Shiites and Druze; between Amal and Hizballah; between leftist revolu-

tionaries and rightist royalists; between the ambitions of Syria, Egypt, and Iraq for Arab hegemony; between fundamentalist Muslim Brethren and the Baath leaders, to mention only a few. We Israelis are split into secular and religious Jews, socialists and nationalists, left-wing Peace Now activists and right-wing *Gush Emunim* (Block of Faith) settlers, westernized Ashkenazi and "orientalized" Sephardi Jews, the Likkud and the Labor alignment. *Nothing unites each party to the conflict better than the enemy.* We need our enemies.

THE ARAB MIND

Although Zonis and Offer (1985) criticized the national-character model for understanding the conflict, many scholars have pointed out that the psychology of the Arabs is very different from that of Westerners. "The Arab Mind" has preoccupied psychologists, psychiatrists, and anthropologists. Moses' analysis seems to ignore the specific psychological problems of the Arabs.

The Berber chronicler Abu-Zaid Abd-ar-Rahman ibn-Khaldun (1332–1406) is considered the greatest of Arab historians. He wrote that the Arabs were wild, savage, destructive, uncivilized, proud, ambitious haters of government and enemies of culture (Patai, 1973, pp. 19–20). Ibn-Khaldun thought that the Arabs were savage, wild, and destructive *because* they were proud, strong, hard, ambitious, and always wanting to lead and to rule. They love freedom, he wrote, and hate authority and government. The Arabs cannot stand to be ruled by others. Ibn-Khaldun's disciple, the Mameluke historian Taqi ad-Din Ahmad al-Maqrizi (1364–1442), also described the national character of the Arabs in a most unflattering manner. He wrote that the Egyptian Arabs were unreliable, cowardly, stingy, lying, cheating, fanatical, libelous, traitors and thieves (Patai, 1973, pp. 20–21). All of this can obviously not be true of all Arabs at all times. At the same time, it may have characterized the group behavior of the Arabs in the 14th and 15th centuries. It is ironic, and may be significant, that both of these Arab historians were not purely Arab. Ibn-Khaldun was of Berber origin, and Al-Maqrizi was a Mameluke.

Honor and Shame

Hamady (1960) called Arab culture "the culture of shame." She argued that *shame* is the worst feeling for an Arab, and that the need to preserve

one's own honor and the honor of one's family, clan, and tribe is crucial. Any injury, real or imaginary, to one's honor causes the Arab a painful, unbearable feeling of shame that must be wiped out or repaired by an act of revenge that injures those who have damaged one's honor. This code of honor can lead to interminable blood feuds between Arab clans and to the killing of one's own daughter if she has become pregnant out of wedlock.

Honor *(sharaf)* is very important in Arab culture (Hamady, 1960; Patai, 1973; Laffin, 1975). To lessen the burning pain of what they felt to be their humiliation by the Jews, the Arabs of Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon talked themselves into believing that it was not the Israelis who had defeated them but the Americans, and that the Israelis would last no longer than the Crusaders' Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, set up in 1099 and defeated by the Kurdish leader Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi (Saladin) in 1187.

An important part of the Arab concept of *sharaf* (honor) is the freedom from being ruled by others. An Arab proverb says that nothing is more humiliating than being under another man's authority. At the same time, in the traditional Arab family the father has absolute authority, and the son must submit to him. Can this be the reason the Arabs hate government so badly? The harsh rule of the father at home may cause the son to rebel and to displace his rage onto political governors. The father's honor depends on his ability to maintain his authority in the family. What about the son's honor? I shall examine this question in the context of the Palestinian Arab family.

The psychoanalytic view of shame is that it begins at an early stage in our development, during the second year of our life, when we must wrestle with the issues of separation, individuation, and differentiation from our mother and develop a sense of autonomy, separateness, and self. Our toilet training may cause us to feel shame when we soil ourselves with feces or wet ourselves with urine. The sense of lack of autonomy is tied in with the feeling of shame. Honor, pride, and *amour-propre* are aspects of narcissism, the maintenance of self-worth, self-respect, and self-love.

The Fahlawi Personality

Amar (1964) coined the term *Fahlawi personality* to describe Arab culture. The, *Fahlawi* is characterized by his seeking the easiest and quickest way to his every goal, shirking hard work and effort, boasting of his own achievements and deriding his fellows, flattery, cheating,

bribery, and lies. He covers up his failures and defeats, becomes quickly excited and violently daring when it seems to him he will easily achieve his wishes, and cools down very fast when he faces obstacles.

The *Fahlawi* person has exaggerated self-confidence and arrogance and always assigns responsibility to others. Amar believes that the Fahlawi suffers from a profound feeling of inferiority, a burning feeling of shame, and a terrible fear of humiliation should his true deeds become public knowledge. He makes a great show of chivalry, manliness, honor, daring, and courage because deep down he fears the reverse: that he is without honor, shameful, cowardly, and helpless.

Sadiq Jalal al-Azm (Haim, 1971, p. 6; Patai, 1973, pp. 60, 111–112) believes that one of the chief causes of the Arab defeats in their wars with Israel is the extreme Arab tendency to project and externalize all sense of guilt and responsibility upon others, to boast, to live in fantasy, and to deny painful reality. Al-Azm and Amar stressed that the old-fashioned Arab society encourages rigidity and conservatism. Arab commanders cannot adapt themselves to the rapidly changing conditions in wartime and are unable to find new solutions or moves to counter the problems they keep facing. They are fearful of reporting their failures and defeats to their superiors, which causes the Supreme Command to lack vital information needed to conduct the war. This description is strikingly similar to that of Dixon's view of military incompetence. Dixon (1976) believes that the rigidity of the bad commander and his fear of losing the love of his superiors, who unconsciously stand in his mind for his early parents, cause terrible catastrophes in time of war.

Moughrabi (1978) critically surveyed the literature on the "Arab basic personality." Although Zonis and Offer (1985) objected to the psychopathology model in the scholarship of the Arab–Israeli conflict, several scholars have insisted on the psychological particularity of the Arabs. Glidden (1972) argued that Arab culture is mentally pathological by Western psychiatric yardsticks. He warned his readers that Arab culture must be examined from the viewpoint of Islam and of the Middle East rather than from that of Christian Europe and America. Arab notions of politeness, property, honor, privacy, physical interpersonal space, truth, lies, and many other values are radically different from Western notions of the same values. Arabs tend to touch each other, interrupt each other, invade each other's privacy, lie, cheat, and act altogether differently from Europeans.

Patai (1973) attempted to explain the special emotional makeup of the Arabs as arising from the original way of life of the desert nomads *(beduin)*. The desert Arabs value sons vastly more than daughters because men can fight other tribes for survival, avenge humiliations, and

thereby save the tribe from shame. The desert Arabs often used to bury their female children alive in the sand. Both Patai (1973) and Laffin (1975), whose book unabashedly bears the same title as Patai's, stress the fact that in Arab culture the son, unlike the daughter, enjoys an overindulgence of his wishes and is spoiled by the women of his family. When he reaches a certain age, however, he is suddenly forced to be self-sufficient, to work, to serve, to give, to obey his father, to submit to him, and to keep silent in his father's presence. This is a sharp, traumatic turn of events even in the best of cases. The Arab boy harbors a deep feeling of rage against his father. This can become worse in families where the father beats up his son when the latter does not obey him or does not respect his honor as the father wishes. Father and son are then chronically enraged at each other.

Several scholars, including Glidden (1972), Hamady (1960), and Patai (1973), claim that severe emotional blows befall the Arab boy at a tender age, when he ceases to be the object of the love and adulation of his mother and sisters and becomes the direct object of his father's aggression. At first the son receives much care from his mother, because Arab society rewards a woman who has sons much more than one who has daughters. In the worst of cases the son suffers narcissistic injuries from his mother as well. The mother, whose social standing in Arab society is not elevated, may herself feel hurt or oppressed, and may not be able to give her son the love, warmth, understanding, and separate existence that he so badly needs.

If these scholars are right, feelings of rage overwhelm the Arab boy from a young age. In the best of cases he may be able to unconsciously channel them into constructive, creative avenues. In the worst cases, he will displace them onto the Israeli enemy who has robbed him of his motherland, as he feels, join the terrorist organizations, or hurl rocks and firebombs. The murderous rage of the terrorist is unconsciously displaced from the original object, father or mother, onto the Jews, onto Israel. As the Iranian *mullahs* genuinely believe that the United States is the Devil himself, so the Arab terrorist is often genuinely convinced that Israel is the embodiment of Evil.

Issues of Separation and Individuation

Volkan (1979) argued that among the Turks the process of separation and individuation from the mother is incomplete. The Turkish family rewards the child for obedience, imitation, and conformity and punishes it for activity, independence, curiosity, and rebellion. The family, clan, or tribe are supremely important, not the individual. This is also true of

the Arabs, among whom family and clan are all-important (Patai, 1973). Among the Arabs, separation and individuation are also incomplete, there is no full emotional autonomy and maturity, and a deep feeling of shame pervades the soul. There is also a strong tendency to split one's world up into all-good and all-bad objects. The fighting stance is endemic. An old Arab saying goes "Myself against my brother, myself and my brother against our cousin, myself, my brother and my cousin against the whole world."

This warlike attitude derives from the inner processes of projection and externalization. These two concepts are similar, but projection refers to unconscious feelings such as rage, hostility, hatred, and death wishes against loved ones, whereas externalization refers to aspects of the self such as weakness, greed, stinginess, meanness, stupidity, or sloth. Arab culture has numerous examples of the attribution of unpleasant traits to non-Arab minorities such as Jews. The Quran itself includes many unfavorable references to Jews and to other ethnic and religious groups.

Despite Glidden's caveats, from the psychoanalytic viewpoint the *Fahlawi* personality traits of the average Arab listed by Hamid al-Amar and Sadiq Jalal al-Azm are those of a narcissistic child who is unable or unwilling to face the difficulties of its life, internal and external. The child unconsciously falls back on emotionally regressive defenses such as denial, projection, and externalization, being dishonest with both itself and the outside world. The effects of such character structure on the Arab–Israeli conflict are disastrous. The massive externalization of everything it cannot stand in itself brings about a blind hatred of the Jews and of Israel, over and beyond whatever real injustice may have been done to the Arabs by these enemies, which makes it impossible to make peace.

Projection is a very crucial factor in the causation of wars, including the Arab–Israeli ones. There is nothing that unites the Arabs as much as their hatred of Israel. The enemy is as necessary to the Arabs as it is to us Israelis. Without Israel the Arabs would have been mired in their own bloody internal struggles. Let us recall that the Sabra and Shatila massacre of 1982 was carried out, after all, by Christian Lebanese Arabs against Muslim Palestinian Arabs.

THE ISRAELI MIND

Patai (1977) attempted to analyze the psychology of the Jews based on their history. He concluded that there were so many different Jewish

types in the world that it was well-nigh impossible to make any general statements about them. At the same time *it is impossible to ignore our collective historical narcissistic injuries,* such as the loss of the kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C.E., the loss of the kingdom of Judah and the First Temple in 586 B.C.E., the loss of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., the destruction of Judea in 135 C.E., and the many centuries of antisemitism, persecutions, massacres, and humiliations both in Christian Europe and in the Muslim world, culminating in the Nazi Holocaust of our own time, in which one third of the world's Jews were slaughtered.

Political Zionism was an attempt to turn back the wheels of history and to restore the Land of Israel, the unconscious symbol of the Great Good Early Mother. Many of the people of the second *aliyah* in 1905–1914 were extremists, fanatics, idealists, and "difficult" people. They were very stubborn, waged interminable power struggles, were struggling with fusion-separation issues and often had terrible family and personal lives. We Israelis as a group suffer from serious emotional problems to this very day. The expansionist ambitions of extreme rightist groups in Israel may spring from an inner feeling of incompleteness that their members carry within them from their very early life, feelings arising from disturbances in the early mother-infant relationship (Faber, 1981).

Those who feel whole inside do not need an expansion of their land. Those who feel damaged or incomplete within themselves must make themselves whole by expanding their motherland, with which they identify and fuse. This does not mean that extreme left-wing parties have emotionally healthy members. Every extremism, political or otherwise, may be a defense against deep emotional conflict. Extreme aggressiveness and hyperactivity may be a defense against feelings of helplessness and worthlessness.

Life in Israel is full of pressures and tensions, economic, social, communal, ethnic, religious, and personal. We Israelis express our anxiety through aggressive, even violent behavior in the streets, in the stores, in the banks, offices, on the road, everywhere. Israel has a world record in road accidents. Our society has many of immigrants who often secretly long to return to their lost homelands. Our 300,000 Holocaust survivors and their children are a world of severe emotional problems unto themselves.

Israeli society is not emotionally healthy. It is full of strife and tension. A sizable portion of the Israeli population is in psychotherapy, many of them in the public mental health centers. Many others need psychotherapy but do not get it. Israeli life is fraught with aggression,

noise, anger, and struggle. Radios blare everywhere. There are verbal fights, even shouting matches, at every step in daily life. Our national myths such as the Land of Israel, the Chosen People, a Light unto the Nations, and the reborn Hebrew nation in its ancient land are far removed from the harsh reality of life in Israel, where people often leave their homes feeling like soldiers going out into the battlefield. The wars with the Arabs contribute to the tension, but the tension also contributes to the wars.

THE HOSTILITY BETWEEN SIMILAR ETHNIC GROUPS

Zonis and Offer (1985) pointed out that the most terrible wars occur among brethren. "We have seen the enemy, and he is us." The Israelis resemble the Arabs in many ways. The enemy makes it possible for us to externalize all the bad aspects of our group self upon it. We demonize our enemies. All the evil figures of our childhood, witches and demons, are projected upon the enemy. The Arabs see Israel and Zionism as the symbol of Evil. The late Ayatollah Khomeini saw the United States as the Great Satan. Turks and Greeks on Cyprus see each other as the embodiment of Evil. This also happens between Muslims and Hindus in India, Catholics and Protestants in Ulster, Flemings and Walloons in Belgium, Viets and Khmers in Indochina, and so on throughout the world. The enemy, the stranger, the foreigner, make ideal objects for projection and externalization (Volkan, 1988).

The more two adjacent groups resemble each other physically, in their character traits, customs, food, dress, and other cultural aspects, while differing from each other in some minor aspects, the more they tend to project and externalize upon, and to hate, the other group. This may not be the case in the U.S.-Canadian relationship, which is basically an amicable rather than a hostile one, even though Canadians often complain of U.S. economic domination. Freud (1918, p. 199) called this fascinating yet tragic phenomenon "the narcissism of minor differences."

"ORIENTAL" JEWS AND ARABS

It is customary in Israel to distinguish between "Western" or European Jews, who come from European countries, and "Oriental" Jews, who come from Muslim countries. "Oriental" is a euphemism for "Arab." *The latter are never called Arab Jews, even though most of them do come*

from Arab countries. Why? Yoram Perry, the editor of the Israeli daily *Davar,* has attempted to explain why the public opinion polls show Israelis from Muslim countries hate the Arabs more and adopt more hawkish stands than Israelis from Western countries. Perry felt that the inferior social status of the so-called Oriental Jews in Israel makes them try to distance themselves as much as possible from the Arabs, trying to make the Arabs still more inferior. The psychoanalytic view is that the "Oriental" Jews suffer from their own negative self-image, which makes them externalize unacceptable aspects of their selves onto the Arabs. Most of the "Oriental" Jews in Israel came here from Islamic countries. Many of them grew up in an Arab culture, speak Arabic, and eat Arab food. They are naturally more like the Arabs in their looks, character, food, habits, and customs than they are like the Western Jews. But the Arabs are the epitome of the negative self-image in Israel. The Western Jews, who have been the dominant majority, look down upon both Arabs and Oriental Jews. It is a standard racist joke in Israel that Bialik, the national poet, could not stand the Arabs because they looked so much like the "Oriental" Jews.

It is precisely for this reason that the "Oriental" Jews have a strong unconscious need to ascribe their negative self-image, which at least partly results from their discriminatory treatment by the Western Israelis, to the Arabs. The need to attribute to others the unpleasant aspects of our self, in order not to be aware of them inside us, creates an emotional and physical distance between us and the others, the erection of walls and boundaries between Us and Them, which make it possible to keep projecting and externalizing. Those who believe that massive denial and projection occur among the Arabs cannot escape the fact that they occur among us as well.

US AND THEM

The GAP report entitled *Us and Them* (Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, 1987) deals in detail with the early defensive processes in our lives such as externalization, projection, denial, splitting, and projective identification, all of which play a crucial role in the violent feelings of ethnic nationalism. The main point of the report is that our earliest feelings for our mother are displaced onto the ethnonational realm. The national group plays the unconscious role of our early mother, and our wish to fuse with it and to be part of it derives from our regressive wish to fuse with the early mother.

The GAP report claims that the problem with national feelings is not their intensity alone but their quality as well. They are often primitive, undifferentiated, and irrational and lack any intellectual control. The members of the GAP's C.I.R. were divided among those who felt, like Kohut, that ethnic feelings were a normal aspect of human development, and those who argued, like Kernberg, that nationalist feelings were basically pathological. In any event, ethnonationalist feelings derive from the process of splitting between good and bad, and the externalization of evil upon the enemy. These processes occur already in early childhood in the family. The GAP report found all these processes to occur in the Arab–Israeli conflict.

THE INTIFADA AND THE PALESTINIAN ARAB SELF

The conflict between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs in the occupied West Bank of the Jordan River has been simmering for a long time (Reich, 1984). The uprising of the Palestinian Arabs in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 began only in late 1987 and is known as the *intifada*. This Arabic word means *"shaking off."* As a wild horse may shake its rider off its back, so the Palestinian Arabs wish to shake off the yoke of the Israeli Jews. *The crucial motive of the intifada is the profound need of the Palestinian Arabs to improve their self-image.* For 20 years they felt humiliated, despised, oppressed, without honor, rights, and worth. Now they feel proud, important, and with honor. The leadership of the uprising publishes Arabic leaflets every two or three weeks that it circulates among the Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Leaflet No. 36 of March 1989 called upon all Palestinian Arabs to boycott Israeli products by the end of the month. What may seem like economic warfare may also be an unconscious struggle for honor and self-worth. The psychology of the *intifada* is related to that of the Palestinian Arab refugee families from which the young leaders and rioters of the uprising originate. Let us examine these refugee families.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE PALESTINIAN ARAB REFUGEES

The matter of the father's honor and respect in the patriarchal Arab family is of great emotional importance. We need to examine the psychological fate of the Palestinian Arab families who fled their homes,

or were expelled, in 1947–1949 and moved to refugee camps on both sides of the Jordan River. It would be interesting to know how many of the young men throwing rocks and firebombs at the Israeli soldiers in the occupied territories come from such families. Morris (1988), known collectively with Shlaim (1988) and Pappe (1988) as one of the "new Israeli historians," has found that *most of the Palestinian Arab rock throwers and firebombers in the occupied territories are sons of Arab refugees who either fled or were driven from their homes as children in the war of 1947–1949.*

The refugee who was forced to abandon his home lost his status and his honor and suffers from a sense of humiliation and a deep, burning feeling of shame. The sons, members of a new generation, no longer respect his wishes as he had done his own father's. To repair his self-image, regain the respect of his family, and restore his honor in his society, he preserves his authority in his family by being violent with his sons. When the sons disobey or disrespect him, the father is filled with rage and explodes violently at his sons, who he feels have injured his honor. The sons in turn feel humiliated by, and enraged at, their fathers and suffer damage to their sense of self.

In those refugee families there is much tension and rage between fathers and sons, which must be displaced to find an acceptable outlet. The aggression and rage of these sons at their fathers are unconsciously displaced onto the Israeli enemy. The young Palestinian Arabs are not only humiliated by the Israelis; they have first been humiliated by their own fathers. The *intifada* seems to be a natural, obvious response to occupation, oppression and humiliation. Why then did it break out in December 1987, 20 years after the occupation began? The uprising of the young Palestinian Arabs is first and foremost an attempt at repairing their damaged self. The feelings of shame and humiliation are so painful that they make the young Arabs explode in violent rage. The guilt feelings of their fathers at having lost Mother Palestine are displaced and transferred onto the Israeli enemy, who is seen as the embodiment of Evil.

THE INABILITY TO MOURN

Reich (1991) argued that if only both Israelis and Arabs could "resign themselves" to their losses, their intractable conflict would soon be resolved. To my mind such "resignation" is impossible without first going through the painful mourning process. The problem of why, whether, and how people mourn their losses was first tackled by Freud (1917). His

work was continued by Pollock (1961, 1975, 1977, 1989), Rochlin (1973), the Mitscherliches (1975), and Volkan (1981, 1988). Dietrich and Shabad (1989) have stressed the adaptive, creative, and regenerative role of mourning in our lives. Those of us who cannot (or refuse) to mourn their losses are stuck in the past. They cannot move on. The Mitscherliches argued that the Germans could not mourn their heavy losses of *Führer, Reich,* the millions of German dead, the devastation of their country, and the death of their aspirations. They plunged instead into the postwar *Wirtschaftswunder* (Economic Miracle). I argue that the inability to mourn is the key problem in the Arab–Israeli conflict as well.

The problem of mourning arises very early in our lives, when we emerge from the stage of fusion with our mother into the stage of separation and individuation (Mahler, Pine, and Bergman, 1975). We have to mourn the loss of the blissful paradise of union, the loss of the Great Good Early Mother. Our entire life thereafter may be viewed as a succession of separations and losses. Many people are unable to mourn properly, because their mother experiences their early attempts to separate and individuate as an abandonment of her. She reacts with fear, rage, or depression to such attempts, which makes the infant feel helpless, lost, and overwhelmed with fear.

Fornari (1974) advanced a psychoanalytic theory of war. He was heavily influenced by the theories of Melanie Klein about early human development. Klein stressed our overwhelming feelings for our mothers during the first year of our lives: the fear of being devoured by the mother, the wish to destroy her, the persecutory feelings, and the splitting of our own selves and of our internal image of the mother into all-good and all-bad parts. Fornari's thesis is that *war is the paranoid elaboration of mourning.* War derives from *our inability to mourn our losses,* beginning with the loss of the paradise of our early fusion with our mother. We feel that we have damaged or destroyed our Early Mother. We project our guilt feelings for having destroyed the Early Mother upon our enemies. The mother is unconsciously identified with the nation.

The Kleinian theory is that irrationally but powerfully, we feel guilty for having damaged our Early Mother, whom we abandoned when we began to separate and individuate from her. The motherland unconsciously stands for our idealized Early Mother. Our guilt feelings are displaced from mother to country and projected upon the enemy. We are certain that the enemy wishes to destroy our mother country. We are filled with rage at this enemy and wish to annihilate him. Projection and externalization are the key processes in this elaboration.

These matters are very complex and have given rise to hot disputes among psychoanalysts (Hughes, 1989). The unconscious motives for war have been disputed by scholars who argue that there are very real causes of war, such as the greed of nations for territory, profit, and domination, and that destructive feelings are not only projected but really exist in our enemies. Volkan (1988) has shown how we need and use our enemies for our psychological survival. I am aware of the fact that I have just given an oversimplified review of Fornari's theory. Still, this is its basic thesis, and it constitutes a minor revolution in the psychological view of war. I shall later examine its relevance to the Arab–Israeli conflict.

If we consider the very painful historical losses suffered by both Jews and Arabs, and their great difficulties in mourning them, we may sense Fornari's meaning. The Nazi Holocaust, in which six million Jews perished within a few years (1941–1945), is a recent example of Jewish losses, and Palestine is a recent example of Arab losses. Each side has dealt with its losses through projection and denial. It is my thesis that both Jews and Arabs have been unable to mourn their great historical losses. This is the reason for the absence of chronological Jewish historiography from the first to the 16th centuries (Yerushalmi, 1982) and for the nonhistoricity of the Arabs (Laroui, 1976). *Those who argue that Jewish religious services and Israeli life are permeated with mourning do not seem to use the term "mourning" in the sense of grieving and accepting one's losses, but rather in the sense of bemoaning them and refusing to come to terms with them.*

Mack (1979) delineated seven principal aspects of the conflicts between neighboring ethnic groups:

1. The identity of self and nation.
2. The problem of historical grievances.
3. The intergenerational transmission of attitudes toward the "other."
4. Splitting, externalizing, and mirroring: the demonization of the "other."
5. The egoism of victimization.
6. War as therapy.
7. Aggression and the inability to mourn.

It seems clear that all these aspects apply to the Arab–Israeli conflict, yet no scholar seems to have stressed the crucial importance of the last aspect.

In order to live in the present and in reality, one must first mourn the losses of the past and accept them. The Jews have been unable to mourn their great historical losses: the loss of land, independence, holy city, temple, and millions of their people. The mourning process has been too painful. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., the Jews closed themselves up inside an ahistorical bubble and refused to write their chronological history. In 1574 the Italian Jewish scholar Azariah de' Rossi published his Hebrew book *Meor Enayim* (Eye Opener), in which he translated the classical Hellenistic Jewish writings and wrote the first truly scholarly Jewish history since Josephus. The rabbis banned his book, fearful of having the ahistorical bubble in which they lived burst by it. The Jews continued to live in the past and in fantasy.

To my mind, *the inability to mourn is a key psychological factor in the Arab–Israeli conflict.* The two parties to our tragic conflict have not been able to resign themselves to their losses. Some Jews still wish to rebuild the Third Temple on the site of the mosque of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and restore the glories of the Kingdom of Solomon. The Arabs have not made peace with their loss of Palestine, their status as refugees, the frustration of their national ambitions, and their defeats in their wars with Israel. They seize upon the war of October 1973 as a symbol of a great victory and of the restoration of Arab honor. Although they publicly aspire to a Palestinian state within the occupied territories, they privately wish to recapture all of Palestine.

The Palestinian National Covenant, still in force, calls for the recovery of *all* of Palestine—including Israel. The terrorists of the more extreme splinter factions of the P.L.O. have definitely not accepted the loss of their country. They live more in fantasy than in reality, more in the past than in the present. They are full of murderous narcissistic rage. Our personal and national narcissism is directly related to our inability to mourn, to let go of the past, to separate from the lost object of our love, whether Early Mother or early motherland. The more individuals or groups are mired in a symbiotic relationship with their early love object, the more they need to compensate themselves for its loss with self-love. Those who are unable to separate and individuate from their Early Mother will find it harder to mourn the loss of their motherland when they are forced to leave it.

We Israelis have not properly mourned our terrible losses in the Nazi Holocaust, but it may be psychologically impossible to mourn the death of six million Jews. Every year we mark the Memorial Day for the Holocaust and Heroism. The inclusion of "heroism," of Jewish resistance, ghetto uprisings, and partisan fighters against the Nazis in the

commemoration of the Holocaust seems to be an unconscious attempt to escape the terrible pain of our losses and deny the enormity of the catastrophe by telling ourselves that the Jews of Europe "were not led like lambs to the slaughter." Even professional mental health workers denied the disaster for a long time. The psychiatric literature about Holocaust survivors began to be published only twenty years after the end of the war, in the 1960s.

During the late 1960s and 1970s we Israelis thought of Sinai as part of our land. Our prolonged, comical, and tragic conflict with Egypt over the tiny piece of real estate called Taba, which was finally resolved by Taba's reverting to Egypt, is another indication that we Israelis have not properly mourned the loss of the territory we gave back to Egypt, namely the Sinai peninsula. It is also further proof of our need for enemies. Furthermore, all Israelis who immigrated to Israel from other countries have had to undergo a process of mourning over their native lands, where they were born and grew up.

Many people have been immigrating to Israel from the Soviet Union, some because they could not get visas to the United States. Israel is an *adoptive motherland* for these immigrants, whom we like to call *olim* (ascenders). This term betrays the *fantasy* that Israel is set high above all other lands. Our Zionist slogans call Israel the "natural motherland" of every Jew. But to become a true Israeli the immigrants must first mourn the loss of the country of their birth and adopt their new country.

Nostalgia for their native lands is common among immigrants in Israel. Many foreign-born Israelis still speak their mother tongue rather than Hebrew, are emotionally and culturally tied to their country of origin, read newspapers and books in their native tongue, and live among immigrants from the same countries. Many Israelis still hold two passports, one from their native country as well as the Israeli one. Some German-born Israelis have requested and accepted German passports, as have some of their Israeli-born children.

The inability to mourn and to separate from what we have lost increases aggression against the out-group, against the enemy, whereas the painful but vital process of mourning decreases it. Fornari made a similar point in his study of war. The same is true of individual's — *those who weep and mourn their losses are no longer filled with warlike rage.* They are free of guilt feelings for having abandoned their mother, or for damaging their motherland, and no longer need to project their guilt upon others. The projection of guilt feelings upon the enemy produces murderous rage and is most dangerous.

THE RESISTANCE OF ISRAELI SCHOLARS TO PSYCHOANALYTIC VIEWS

It would be inappropriate to end this chapter without exploring the complex attitude of Israeli scholars toward psychoanalysis. A typical example one may take Harkabi's book on the Arab attitudes to Israel. Harkabi (1972) warned his readers against the "limitations of psychological explanation":

> Arab hostility to Israel was not a response to any psychological need to relieve tension or aggressive impulses. In the beginning it was the outcome of [Arab] opposition to Jewish settlement [in Palestine], and it reached its peak as a reaction to the establishment of Israel, which Arabs regarded as the usurpation of a homeland. The main cause of the conflict is not psychological but substantially political: a conflict over territory and a clash over real interests [p. 413].

Viewing psychological causes as the reverse of "real" political ones seems to me a fundamental error. Unconscious feelings are just as real as territorial conflict and, in fact, may even cause it. The very need for a national territory is in itself a profound, powerful psychological motive. So are the need for self-definition, national identity, and political recognition. Unconscious emotional motives are in themselves very *real* causes of intergroup strife.

Harkabi himself seems to have understood that our conflict derives from deeper emotional causes. He cited many psychological theories about the conflict (Harkabi, 1972, pp. 113–170). Some of these touched upon the question of each party's self-image and view of the other. Others dealt with the processes of projection and externalization in each party, the selective perception of reality, repression, denial, filtering, and other unconscious processes. Harkabi noted the Arab tendency to externalize blame and assign it to others. He also pointed out that the Arabic language contains many expressions of hostility, contempt, derision, defamation, loathing, and hatred.

The Muslim splitting between *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb* is most important psychologically. The House of Islam is all-good, and the rest of the world is all-bad. Islam is a conquering, warlike religion. The *jihad* reminds Muslims of the glorious days of the Caliphate. Harkabi (pp. 139–142) quoted psychologists who explained Arab behavior by using the model of the authoritarian personality, and he quoted others who

disputed this theory. He even quoted from Arab literature to show that important Arab writers had criticized the Arab tendency to externalize guilt, and that the Arab attitude to Israel is highly ambivalent (Harkabi, pp. 151-153). All of this seems to indicate a measure of insight into psychoanalytic theory.

Harkabi was also aware of the fact that the Arabs have a problem with their self-image and self-esteem. He understood that the negative self-image of the Arabs causes them to rewrite their history in a distorted fashion. Yet, despite all his psychological insight, Harkabi came out strongly against psychological theories this attitude to psychoanalysis is deeply ambivalent. By contrast, Heradstveit (1981) cited many cognitive psychological theories about the Arab–Israeli conflict, but did not rule out psychoanalytic ones.

How can one explain the ambivalent attitude of the Israeli scholars to the psychoanalytic approach? I believe that the latter threatens them emotionally. It exposes the great complexity and the deep ambivalence behind national feelings, the fact that every feeling may conceal its opposite, and that our image of our enemy derives from our own self-image. This is a profound threat to the *rationalistic* viewpoint of Israeli historians, political scientists, international relations scholars, and even psychologists (Beit-Hallahmi, 1972).

Scholars are afraid of their own unconscious feelings in this matter. *The rationalistic viewpoint is in itself an unconscious defense against the great emotional difficulty of understanding this conflict.* Israeli scholars in particular, who are part of a culture that refuses to mourn its losses, are especially resistant to psychoanalytic explanations. American scholars are much more open to psychoanalytic theories in history and politics than their Israeli colleagues, as the readers of *Political Psychology* and *The Psychohistory Review* well know. They are less threatened by such theories than their Israeli colleagues because they do not need to maintain a rigidly ideological posture in this conflict.

DISCUSSION

Some of my readers may argue vehemently, as did Harkabi, that the Arab–Israeli conflict has clear, rational causes and roots in reality, that there is no need to look for unconscious motives. Did not hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs have to flee their homes and become refugees in 1947-1949? Did not the Arabs of Hebron massacre the Jews in 1929? Did not the Jewish *Irgun* terrorists massacre the Arabs of Deir

Yasseen near Jerusalem in 1948? Do not the Palestinian Arabs wish to throw us Israeli Jews into the sea?

If we examine the feelings and thoughts of both sides in this conflict, we shall find that they are at least partly *irrational*. We Israelis like to think that the Palestinian Arab refugee problem did not result from our actions in the war of 1948, but from the concerted attack of several Arab armies upon Israel and from the call issued by the attacking countries to the Palestinian Arabs to leave their villages and towns to make it possible for the Arab armies to liquidate Israel. The "new Israeli historian" Benjamin Morris (1988) has shown in his recent book that there were hardly any cases of Arabs abandoning their villages as a result of an order from some Arab authority. Yet it will be a long time before our view changes on this matter. Similarly, the massacre of the Hebron Jews in 1929 was terrible, but it did not involve all the Arabs of that city, nor all the Jews of Palestine. There were even some Arabs who personally saved Jews, risking their own lives. The Deir Yasseen massacre was carried out by an extreme right Jewish nationalist terror group. If it was horrible, the massacre of hundreds of Muslim Palestinian Arabs by Christian Lebanese Arabs at Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon in 1982, or the Tell az-Zaatar massacre a few years earlier, or the massacres of Christian Arabs by Druze or Shiite Arabs throughout the Lebanese civil war, were still worse. The question of whether the Arabs in fact wish to throw us Israelis into the sea is ambiguous. Many scholars have pointed out the Arab tendency to exaggerate, both emotionally and in their perception of reality. Neither is our peace treaty with Egypt a piece of paper only. It has a psychological significance, even if it is a distant, cold peace for the time being.

The problem is not with external reality alone but with our emotional perception of that reality. Both Israelis and Arabs suffer from deep narcissistic injuries. Both we and they have historical reasons for feeling an ownership of Israel or Palestine, as well as deep hurts, discrimination, and wrongs. The Nazi Holocaust of the European Jews has left an indelible mark upon us Israeli Jews. Our tendency to identify the Arabs with the Nazis and Arafat with Hitler, as Begin did in 1982, is clearly unrealistic and irrational. It is motivated by the deepest fears, projections, and living in the past.

When the Palestinian Arab *intifada,* or uprising, began, the Israeli writer Moshe Shamir compared the Palestinian *shabiba* youth movement to the *Hitlerjugend* and Arafat to Hitler. Shamir too is living in the past. All the terrorist acts of the P.L.O. and other fanatics cannot compare with what the Nazis did to the Jews in their extermination camps. Those

Arabs who compare us Israelis to the Nazis are not living in present reality either.

Without a proper understanding of the emotional roots of the conflict within us — our own unconscious conflicts with ourselves; our struggle with our self-image and with our group and national self; the problem of our grandiose self; our inability to mourn and to separate; the Us-and-Them splitting process that separates us from our enemies, making Us all-good and Them all-bad; projection of the bad aspects of our self upon the enemy; and similar yet even more difficult processes within the Arabs — we cannot even hope to begin to resolve this most intractable conflict.

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