



YEḤIEL MICHAEL PINES: FROM THE VISION OF ZIONISM TO THE REALITY

Yeḥiel Michael Pines was one of the precursors of Zionist nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe during the latter half of the 1860s and the 1870s. His Zionist activity spanned three periods in the evolution of the movement: that of the precursors, of Ḥovevei Ẕion, and of political Zionism up to 1913. There is only one other example of such tireless public Zionist activity over a period of almost half a century—M.L. Lilienblum, Pines's contemporary and opponent. There will be occasion to point out their similarities and differences in the course of this article. However it was Pines, not Lilienblum, who successfully translated the Zionist national ideology into reality, even before the First Aliya, by coming to live in Palestine in 1878 as the representative of the Moses Montefiore Testimonial Fund commemorating Montefiore's 90th birthday.

Pines's public life may be divided into three periods: 1867-1878, the crystallization of his social and national Zionist philosophy; 1878-1892, front-line activities on behalf of the new yishuv and Ḥovevei Ẕion; 1892-1913, in the border area between old and new in Palestine. Zionist history has been kind to Pines. City streets and a *moshav* have been named after him, and the years during which he was estranged from Ḥovevei Ẕion and later from political Zionism have been forgotten, thanks to the vivid memory of his years as one of the prime movers in the new agricultural settlement of Palestine, from the day of his arrival in 1878 until his forced resignation from the Executive Committee of the Odessa Committee in 1892. The Pines of 1878 and before, and the man of 1892 and afterwards, remains an enigma which the historian has yet to unravel.

Pines grew up in the very heart of Lithuanian Jewish society, in the village of Rozhinoy near Bialystok in the Grodno district. Born to a family of scholars and wealthy businessmen, he married into a similar family, that of Shemarya Luria of Mohilev. He was a contemporary of Smolenskin and Lilienblum, the third generation of the Jewish Enlightenment in Russia which reached adulthood at the beginning of Alexander II's reforms when the events of the reign of Nicholas I were still fresh in

their minds. This generation witnessed the polarization between those who turned to the radical Hebrew and Russian Enlightenment and those who took the middle path of loyalty to tradition and to the moderate Enlightenment. Both camps grew up in a profoundly Jewish environment. We shall devote ourselves primarily to the group of moderate Enlighteners who remained loyal to Hebrew and eventually espoused a nationalist ideology. The difference between radical individuals and Pines was that the latter continued to lead a traditional Jewish life, whereas the former ceased entirely to be observant Jews. Pines continued to reside in the town where he grew up, while his contemporaries moved to centers of Enlightenment in Odessa, Petersburg, or the West. The migration enabled them to maintain their intellectual independence. Nonetheless they, like Pines, were fully aware of the intellectual, social, and material distress of the Jews of Eastern Europe, a sensitivity which made them willing to examine the fundamental religious and social assumptions of Jewish culture in light of the actual social conditions of their time.

The confrontation between Jewish culture in all its complexity and the reality of Jewish life, and the assumption that there must be no rupture in conscious awareness or in behavior patterns, was at the basis of all their literary and public activity, whether connected with the Land of Israel and national redemption, or with tradition and Enlightenment. On the basis of this assumption, they outlined the modernization required by Jewish society. In this sense they were not only originators and forerunners of an idea, but also articulated the revisionist trends of thought within East European Jewish society. What were the circumstances in which people like Pines became part of the Jewish national awakening; what did they actually think, and how did these beliefs find expression in their public activity?

EXPONENT OF JEWISH NATIONAL REFORM

Let us begin by viewing Pines not as a unique figure, but rather as the leader of a group which published its views in the Hebrew journals of the day, principally *HaLevanon* which was published in Mainz, and *HaMaggid* which appeared in Lyck in Eastern Prussia. This group included rabbis and writers such as A.L. Frumkin, G. Jaffe, M. Eliasberg, S. Mohilewer, Y. Brill, editor of *HaLevanon*, D. Gordon, editor of *HaMaggid*, and Y.D. Frumkin, editor of *Havazzelet*. They were not all the same age. However, they all adhered to the traditional Jewish way of life and were at the same time willing to view the claims of the Jewish Enlightenment sympathetically. Their public position evolved out of a confrontation with the forces of disintegration within East European Jewish society, forces concentrated within the ranks of the proponents of the radical

Enlightenment. Pines represented a new type of public figure—a writer whose medium was the press and whose main function was not to convey information but rather to educate the public along lines laid down by the editors. He was the most prolific and active member of the group in his exploitation of this medium to develop his ideas and impart them to a wide audience. He was also the most original among them in his ideas and life-style.

Unlike the other precursors of the Zionist idea associated with Rabbi Z.H. Kalischer, whose approach to the public contained only a marginal residue of Enlightenment philosophy, the group in question assimilated much of the social criticism of the Enlightenment. This served as the point of departure for the evolution of its own philosophy. And, whereas such Zionist precursors as Kalischer and Alkalai turned to the Land of Israel simultaneous with or even before turning to Jewish nationalism, the involvement of Pines and his colleagues in Jewish nationalism preceded their ties to the Land of Israel. They embraced Jewish nationalism in reaction to those Jews in Western and Eastern Europe who sought to separate loyalty to the Homeland from loyalty to the Jewish religion. The point of departure for Pines and his colleagues was the political and economic situation of East European Jewry; initially, Palestine was merely one of several options for the solution of the social and economic problems of Russian Jewry. Pines's group embraced Zionist nationalism without any of the messianic ideas that were central to the followers of Kalischer. Whereas the latter turned to national Zionism out of the messianic hopes for redemption which periodically took hold in various Jewish communities in crisis, Pines and his group focused upon the society in which they lived and sought to deal with its contemporary dilemmas.

Pines joined the public debate on social reform in Russia. As early as 1867 he expressed his views on these issues in the Hebrew journals *HaKarmel* and *HaMeliz*. He discussed such subjects as citizenship, productivization and education, taking stands that were unusual for his circle. He debated with exponents of Reform philosophy in the West who rejected Jewish national aspirations, with anti-Semites who argued that Jews hated Christians, and with radical Enlighteners in Eastern Europe who called for the adoption of the Western Reform formula in the guise of 'Russians of the Mosaic persuasion'. He held that emancipation was not contingent upon the adoption of the majority nationality of the state,¹ and outlined a framework for reform in Jewish education in the spirit of moderate Enlightenment.² Moreover, Pines maintained that the Jews were capable of tilling the soil despite their failures in the Kharson province.³ In 1869 he joined the public debate on the reform of Jewish law which Lilienblum had started the previous year, and the group to which Pines belonged crystallized around this debate.⁴

Pines also took part in the public discussion over the social and

economic future of Russian Jewry that developed in the wake of the economic crisis caused by the famine and epidemics among the Jews of Lithuania and White Russia between 1867 and 1869. To alleviate their distress, he recommended the establishment of a society for the productivization of Russian Jewry in Russia itself, in America, or in Palestine.⁵ Pines preferred Palestine "out of love for the land of our fathers," but he weighed his recommendation in the light of the immediate problem and urged that the most efficient framework be found to "give bread to the thousands of the afflicted." Pines made two major contributions at this stage of his national thinking. He shifted the Enlightenment idea of productivization from the individual to the group, and he developed the view that the anomalous status of the Jews in the Exile vitiates the spiritual world of Jewish society.

Pines was one of the first to apply Enlightenment ideas to the national movement. He argued that making the Jews productive was not only the way to achieve an honorable life for the individual, but a precondition for national existence. "The Land is the basis and foundation upon which a political society and a national community will be perfected." The spirit, the culture and the wisdom of Jewish society are also vitiated by socio-economic conditions. "Torah without work leads to nought." At this stage, Pines's language is not yet polished, but his logic and argumentation are subtle and penetrating. He sharply distinguishes between nationalist Jews whose support of a "Society for the Colonization of the Land of Israel" derives from "a feeling of love and reverence for the land of our fathers," and non-nationalist supporters such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle and Montefiore, who are motivated by "pity and compassion for their tortured and oppressed brethren." He calls for common action on the part of both groups despite the differing outlooks of nationalists and non-nationalists, of "pious rabbis" and "the leaders of the Enlighteners", for the restoration of the people of Israel to the cultivation of the soil, in the Land of Israel or elsewhere. This would result in "the restoration of [the Jews'] former glory" before "the honor of Torah wisdom" were exiled from Israel.⁶

In the positions which Pines developed during the controversy over religious reforms (1868-1871), he took a daring, independent stand. He did not accept the Western Reform rabbis' annulment of Jewish messianic hopes, nor did he approve of the efforts of the Eastern adherents of Enlightenment to remove what they considered later restrictions and accretions to Jewish law. However, he did not categorically reject the concept of reform. He recognized the evolution of *halakha* (Jewish law) and was aware that certain of its elements had been dropped, or rather, "reformed" over the centuries. He called this process internal reform, as opposed to externally imposed reform which was accomplished by pressure from those who had no authority to do so.⁷ For these views

Pines was roundly criticized even by members of his own circle,⁸ criticism which was to be used against him after his arrival in Palestine.

In the course of this controversy, Pines sharpened his political Zionist views. In an open letter to Akiva Lehren (1871), head of the Society of Pekidim and Amarkalim of the Holy Land in Amsterdam, who had reservations about the planned Society for the Colonization of the Land of Israel,⁹ Pines maintained that the hope for the restoration of the Land of Israel to the Jews was vital both to the success of political Zionist aspirations to "kindle the flame of love and national ties" and to the opportunity "to provide bread for thousands of Jews."

His book, *Yaldei Ruhi* (Children of my Spirit), which appeared in two installments in 1872, is a collection of Pines's thinking of those years, and presents a comprehensive formulation of his nationalist views. Pines declares himself an Orthodox Jew but does not promise to defend Orthodoxy under any and all circumstances. He awaits Jewish national and social rebirth. It is interesting to note that the book is dedicated to Montefiore, to Baron H. Guenzburg, and to the Society for the Spread of Enlightenment in Russia. The book includes replies to the proponents of Reform, apologetics for Jewish law and an interpretation of its implications for national, social, and religious concepts, demands for social reform in the spirit of the Enlightenment, and a statement of principle that the Jewish people has no existence apart from the Jewish religion. Pines was to refer constantly to this absolute bond between the people and its religion in later controversies. The fact that *Yaldei Ruhi* was a collection of articles written over a number of years gave rise to certain inconsistencies in his arguments regarding the options for solving the social and economic problems of Russian Jewry in Russia, America or Palestine.

THE DEBATE OVER PINES'S VIEWS

How did his contemporaries accept his ideas? Alexander Zederbaum, who encouraged Pines at the outset of his literary career despite his reservations about some of the marginal ideas in the articles, was totally reserved when Pines entered the controversy over religious reforms.¹⁰ Pines ceased to publish in *HaMeliz* at the close of the 1860s and was to publish again in this newspaper only in the late 1870s, after he moved to Palestine. His friends feared that he had gone too far in his statements on behalf of religious reforms and were apprehensive about the reaction to these statements in the Orthodox Jewish community.¹¹ On the other hand, Y.L. Gordon and Lilienblum viewed him as a serious opponent in the Orthodox camp after he was severely critical of them. Nonetheless they hoped to employ him on their behalf within the religious camp, regarding various matters on which they were in agreement.¹² After the

controversy over religious reforms and the publication of *Yaldei Ruhi* died down, Pines was silent for some years, a silence shared by other participants in the nationalist awakening in the late 1860s and early 1870s. However, Pines addressed himself to this awakening in the pages of the Hebrew press in 1875, before the other forerunners of the nationalist idea.

The debate over the future of the Jewish community in Palestine and of the country itself arose after the establishment of the Moses Montefiore Testimonial Fund by the British Board of Deputies, the despatch of a delegation to Palestine, publication of its recommendations, and the subsequent reply of the Jewish community in that country.¹³ Pines sent a personal letter to Y. Rivlin, secretary of the *Va'ad Kol HaKollelim* (Committee of all the Ashkenazi Communities in the Holy Land), who was a relation on his wife's side. In this letter he urged Rivlin to approve the new initiatives. The letter was published without Pines's knowledge in *Havazzelet* and *HaLevanon*.¹⁴ Of greater interest is the article in which Pines replied to the proposals of Montefiore, Montague, and Asher.¹⁵ He stated that he disagreed with Montefiore "on the method of colonizing the Land of Israel." In his opinion, the issue was one of initiatives for "the restoration of the honor of the people" in its Land. Montefiore, he asserted, was

one of those who hold the nazirite view [that] from the day the Temple was destroyed, Judaism had risen and established its seat under the Throne of Glory and violated its covenant with political life . . . the entire goal of these people is to make Jerusalem a refuge for nazirites and hermits who have retired from this life in favor of life eternal.

Pines further stated with regard to himself:

Like all those who subscribe to the political line, my heart yearns to see Jerusalem in all its beauty like one of those highly extolled European cities . . . not for the Arabs, but for her sons, prisoners of the hope that from every corner of the earth they will stream to visit it, to cultivate it, and to guard it . . .

This was surely a political Zionist statement. Despite differences in outlook, Pines nonetheless called for cooperation between the founders of the Montefiore Fund and the adherents of his own ideas, and to this end he proposed the establishment of commercial companies to finance the planting of citron groves in Palestine, to set up oil and wine presses and export the products to Europe—ideas which were to be realized some twenty years later.

During this period, Pines showed himself to be a man of original ideas, a philosopher of political nationalism, and a person of practical economic vision. During his silent period he apparently abandoned his plans for solving the problems of East European Jewry in Russia or in

America.¹⁶ His decisive views on these subjects aroused the antagonism of Yaacob Lifschitz, who was eventually to become the harshest opponent of Hovevei Zion and the Zionist Organization among the Orthodox. Lifschitz now rose to defend Orthodoxy against the Enlightenment. He spoke on behalf of the values of the 'old yishuv', namely, withdrawal from secular pursuits and devotion to the study of Torah, and he refuted Pines's ideas with theoretical and pragmatic arguments.¹⁷ Y. Rivlin came out in favor of the productivization of the Jewish community in Palestine, but he pointed to the objective difficulties in carrying out this reform—difficulties which Pines ignored.¹⁸ Pines endeavored to defend his views and again showed himself a subtle, acute polemicist.¹⁹

THE MOSES MONTEFIORE TESTIMONIAL FUND

Pines's articles in the Hebrew press, mainly in *HaLevanon*, a publication which was also accredited by the Ashkenazi community in Jerusalem, made him the preferred candidate for serving as the Palestine representative of the Montefiore Fund whose goal was the establishment of enterprises "for improving the situation of our brethren [in Palestine]." Upon the initiative of the committee in London, the debate regarding the necessary qualifications of such a representative was carried on in the Hebrew press. The committee was searching for a European fluent in Hebrew and German, and preferably also in Arabic and English.²⁰ *HaLevanon* added that the representative should also be "a Jew faithful to his religion and a lover of the gates of Zion; the person who knows the Torah and loves to study it will be preferred."²¹ The man who met all these requirements was Y.M. Pines who won the support even of his opponents on both the right and the left.²²

This same period saw the publication of Haim Guedalla's plan to purchase Palestine from the Ottoman Empire. The editors of *HaLevanon* dismissed this plan as sheer fantasy. Pines, however, considered the proposal as constituting a valuable stimulus to the people's aspirations toward national redemption.²³

Pines went to London to receive his official appointment in August 1978. During this visit he witnessed the disagreements between Montefiore and the members of the Committee of Emissaries. While Montefiore admired the pious Jews who devoted themselves to the study of Torah and lived on donations (*halukka*), the representatives of the Committee, Montague and Dr. Asher, had nothing but contempt for them, and published a venomous report about them. Montefiore wanted the money of the Fund to be divided between the students of Torah and productive enterprises, whereas the Committee members wanted the money to be devoted solely to the latter framework.²⁴ Pines was received with cold

hostility by Montefiore, but whether this was because of his disagreement with the Committee or because he disapproved of Pines's published statements, is not known. It was obvious, however, that Montefiore was not pleased with the Fund that had been set up to honor him.

Pines arrived in Palestine in September 1878 and was warmly received by all circles, including representatives of both the Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities.²⁵ Great hopes were pinned on his mission. However, the warmth displayed at his reception was quickly transformed into hostility.²⁶ The details of this transformation have yet to be discovered, though it is obvious that when Pines arrived in Palestine, it was already common knowledge that Montefiore had reservations about him. Moreover, Pines's criticism of Montefiore and the *ḥalukka* recipients had been published in the local press before his arrival, and his independent views on the issues of Enlightenment and religious reforms were well-known. He was also caught up in the fight over the Ashkenazi rabbinic leadership which erupted in Jerusalem between Rabbis Shmuel Salant and Y.L. Diskin after the death of Rabbi Me'ir Auerbach.

Pines's arrival in Jerusalem on behalf of the Montefiore Fund provided him with a framework for action from which he departed to participate in every aspect of the founding of the new national-oriented settlements. He worked hand-in-hand with the founders of Petaḥ Tiqva, Y.M. Solomon and his colleagues who were associated with Rabbi Shmuel Salant. Hence he was a party to the rivalry between them and the "Association of the Founders of the Yishuv," the rival body to the "Founders of Petaḥ Tiqva". He operated with great circumspection in his allocation of the funds entrusted to him, thereby infuriating those who had hoped to benefit from them. His friends in Jerusalem were those who opposed the religious extremists: Dr. Z. Herzberg, founder of the German Orphanage in Jerusalem. Yosef Krieger, secretary to the Governor of Jerusalem, M.Y. Goldschmidt, head of the *batei maḥse* (public housing project), and E. Ben-Yehuda, journalist and lexicographer. He enjoyed friendly relations with the families of Y. Yellin who had been excommunicated for sending his son David to the Alliance school, Y.M. Solomon who was vilified for his part in founding Petaḥ Tiqva, and his relative, Yosef Rivlin, secretary of *Va'ad Kol HaKollelim*.

When Pines's family joined him in 1880, they found themselves cut off from Ashkenazi society. This wealthy family was different in its customs and ways of life. His wife and children dressed differently, he retained a Russian governess, and his daughters studied Hebrew and European languages with private tutors.²⁷ In fact, his family was closer to the more moderate Sephardi élite, and indeed two of his daughters married into Sephardi families.

ACTIVITIES IN PALESTINE

Matters came to a head in late 1881 and early in 1882, when Pines started his own school in Jerusalem with the aim of attracting young men to study Torah and handicrafts; for this he was excommunicated by Diskin and his associates. (In Jerusalem, some people even named their dogs 'Pines'.) The excommunication and its repercussions in the larger Jewish world is a topic in its own right. However, in imposing this ban, the extremists of Jerusalem went too far, and Pines was not one to back down from a fight. Unlike the old Ashkenazi community, he was not dependent on the *kollelim* for his livelihood, nor were his origins in the marginal elements of traditional East European society. Pines had been raised in the very bosom of the solidly middle-class rabbinical aristocracy, and it was thus not difficult for him to rally prominent figures from the rabbinical leadership of Eastern Europe on his behalf against the extremists. His principal allies were his brother-in-law the rabbi of Karlin, Rabbi David Friedman; Rabbi Yosef Zakharia Stern, the rabbi of Shavli; G. Jaffe of Rozhinoy; and Rabbi M. Eliasberg of Boisk, all of whom had long been members of Pines's circle. They put pressure on Rabbi Shmuel Salant of Jerusalem and on the Sephardi rabbinical court to repeal the ban.²⁸ However, the tensions which prevailed from 1878 to 1882 prevented Pines from devoting all his energies to working for the Fund in whose behalf he had come.²⁹

Despite all this, Pines had a hand in every undertaking of the 'new yishuv' in its earliest years. He was the outstanding public figure in Palestine in the 1880s, and his ties to Russian Jewry gave him trusteeship over the funds sent from Russia for the support of new settlement projects. He despatched emissaries to Europe to raise money for the purchase of additional land for Petaḥ Tiqva. Indeed, when Z.D. Levontin arrived in Palestine in March 1882 and set up the "Committee of the Pioneers of Yesud HaMa'ale" whose goal was to encourage migration to Palestine, he insisted that the committee be located in Jaffa rather than Jerusalem in order to minimize Pines's influence. Levontin was a product of that element within southern Russian Jewry which had already undergone secularization and broken away from the central rabbinical authority in Lithuania and White Russia with whom Pines was connected. However, Levontin remained in Palestine for just over one year; the committee which he headed succeeded in establishing only one settlement, Rishon LeZion, which came under Baron Rothschild's patronage one year later, in 1883.

Pines remained the only public figure close to the new settlers during their most trying period. He defended the Bilu movement against Roth-

schild and his officials and against their detractors in the old yishuv. Baron Rothschild of Paris, who took it upon himself to sustain the new settlements financially, refused to support the national zealots and the radical secularist tendencies of the Biluim. Notwithstanding, Pines became the leader of the Bilu movement. Despite their open rejection of the authority of Jewish law, he persuaded them to accommodate themselves to the accepted behavioral norms of the Jewish community in Palestine. Those who could not adjust, however, were under pressure to leave the country. Once again, Pines displayed his independent spirit. He did not abandon the Bilu members even after they remained and settled Gedera, for after all, it was he who had purchased the land for them. He stood fast even against the likes of Rabbis Shmuel Mohilewer and Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin who demanded that the non-religious Bilu settlers of Gedera be expelled from Palestine. On this issue Pines supported the approach of the secular nationalists, Pinsker and Lilienblum.

Pines was the close friend of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, whom he sought to draw closer to the traditional way of life when the linguist first arrived in Palestine. The two helped found the 'Tehiyat Israel' (Rebirth of Israel) Society whose goal was to bring about a national Jewish rebirth through the expansion of Jewish settlement in Palestine and the revival of the Hebrew language. Pines's contribution to the revival of Hebrew was immense; indeed H.N. Bialik pronounced Pines's neologisms more faithful to the structure of the Hebrew language than Ben-Yehuda's.³⁰ The tie between the two friends was not broken even after Ben-Yehuda expressed hostility to the old yishuv and Pines came out in its defense.

THE SABBATICAL YEAR ISSUE

In 1887 Pines was appointed the representative of Hovevei Zion in Palestine and moved from Jerusalem to Jaffa, the administrative center for the new agricultural colonies. He also assumed the task of supervising the Gedera settlers, in an effort to reassure the Orthodox members of Hovevei Zion who feared that the settlers were desecrating the Holy Land with their irreligious ways. Pines's influence over the settlers did in fact reassure their Orthodox critics.

After many unpleasant incidents, the debate over Bilu activity faded away, only to be succeeded by the issue of *shmita* (the Sabbatical year). The biblical laws pertaining to the Sabbatical year were now a live issue after centuries of exile from the Land of Israel, and this became a testing ground for the Zionist national idea. For Lilienblum and Pinsker, the problem was to ensure the economic survival of the new agricultural settlements in which so much money and such far-reaching hopes had been invested, while adapting to the restrictions imposed by Jewish law

and maintaining the hard-won peaceful coexistence with the Orthodox members of the Zionist movement. In addition, Baron Rothschild, whose aid to colonization had been so vital, must not be permitted to abandon the settlements, as he threatened to do if the colonists should observe the laws of *shmita* and let the land lie fallow.

Rabbi Shmuel Mohilewer faced the same problem of the Sabbatical year within the Orthodox camp. The extremists in his group tried to exploit the situation in order to destroy the new settlements and strengthen the old religious establishment. Once again, Pines held to his own independent view. He demanded that the Sabbatical laws be observed in the settlements and that no rabbinical release from their observance be requested, as a matter of principle, and perhaps even more for tactical reasons. His purpose was to show that despite the economic sacrifice entailed, Jewish law was observed in the Hovevei Zion settlements to a greater extent than in Baron Rothschild's colonies whose religious character he held suspect. He also marshalled rationalistic arguments against the rabbinical release from the Sabbatical laws that was made possible by the fictitious sale of the land to a Gentile.³¹

For his stand on *shmita*, Pines was subjected to criticism from every quarter. Lilienblum and Pinsker who had, after the most strenuous efforts, secured a rabbinical release to till the land, could not forgive him for bringing all their efforts to nought by prevailing upon the Gedera settlers not to act in accordance with that release. Pines did not care whether in principle they would act in accordance with the permit; his sole concern was that the Gedera settlers should demonstrate more piety than the self-righteous pontificators of Hovevei Zion. Rabbi Shmuel Mohilewer was angry with Pines for rejecting the release which he himself had signed, and for successfully demonstrating the religiosity of the Gedera settlers whom Mohilewer detested. He nursed a grudge against Pines and refused to support him in later issues.

PINES AND AHAD HA'AM

The storm over the Sabbatical year abated, but Pines remained in the very thick of things. In May 1890 the "Odessa Committee" was formed as an organization recognized by the Russian regime to collect money for settlers and artisans in Palestine and Syria. It despatched a delegation headed by Rabbi Mohilewer to Palestine, which appointed an Executive Committee with headquarters in Jaffa. Pines could not be ignored despite the bitter memories of his conduct in earlier incidents where he had shown how independent and impervious to authority he was. Although Pines was not named chairman, his unequalled first-hand knowledge of conditions in Palestine made it impossible to prevent his appointment to the Executive Committee.

At this time, the "Bnei Moshe" secret society was founded, headed by Ahad Ha'Am. The society demanded changes in the order of Hovevei Zion priorities. Ahad Ha'Am argued that preparation for spiritual nationalism must precede the emphasis on practical undertakings that had reached a stage of crisis. The Bnei Moshe society attracted the best of the Hovevei Zion members, the great majority of whom were at least a generation younger than Pines, although there were some older members such as Lilienblum for a brief period, Rabinowitz of Warsaw, Syrkin of Minsk, and others. They believed that political Zionist aspirations would not only do away with the social and economic distress of the Jews but would create a new type of Jew. In the early stages, Ahad Ha'Am did not define the values of the new nationalist Jew, and the rules of the society were in harmony with traditional Jewish norms. In fact, it was Pines who, more than twenty years before him, had first mooted ideas of a national renaissance that would at the same time be spiritual. Even Ahad Ha'Am's criticism of Hovevei Zion appeared three years after Pines published similar views in *HaZvi*. It was thus only natural that Pines, too, should have a hand in the new association.³²

Meanwhile, the Odessa Executive Committee had become involved in fraudulent land purchase deals, and the entire Jewish world was up in arms against it. At that time (spring 1891), Ahad Ha'Am was visiting Palestine for the first time. Fearing that the disgrace attached to the Executive Committee would rub off on his society, he hastened to expel Pines and his friend Ben-Tovim, who were members of the Executive Committee, from the Bnei Moshe order. Upon his return to Odessa, Ahad Ha'Am also exerted pressure to have Pines removed from the Executive Committee as well. It has been maintained that Pines's subsequent public fight with Ahad Ha'Am over the schools in Jaffa, in late 1893 and during 1894, was his revenge for being deprived of his livelihood when he was removed from the Executive Committee. However, what actually occurred during the almost year-and-a-half that elapsed between the Executive Committee scandal and Pines's dismissal from that body, and the public controversy over the schools in Jaffa, seems to point in a different direction.

As of 1892, Pines was deprived of his standing in the new yishuv, and the funds for settlement activities no longer passed through his hands. The efforts of the new yishuv had taken root, the Odessa Committee continued to function within the framework of self-imposed limitations, and further colonization was curtailed. Pines continued to reside in Jaffa some two years after he left the Executive Committee, devoting himself to a wide variety of literary activities. He was the chief correspondent of *Ha'Areẓ* and its successors, periodicals edited by his brother-in-law, Z. Jawitz, and wrote on everything pertaining to the Zionist national idea and on every aspect of the new yishuv. He also resumed his work of scientific translations into Hebrew.

In the summer of 1893 Pines sought to join the teaching staff of the Bnei Moshe schools founded in Jaffa. His motives were not primarily financial; rather, Pines believed that he could redirect the secular trend of the schools. Knowing the members of the Bnei Moshe central office in Jaffa—Yehuda Gur, David Judelevitz, Israel Belkind, and Menahem Stein—he was concerned about the new “liberal” nationalist orientation which they would give the school, and feared that this would provoke the contempt and rage of the Orthodox Jews who supported the new yishuv and the Hovevei Zion movement. Aḥad Ha‘Am, who was then visiting Palestine for the second time, rejected his application. If Pines had not submitted to any authority in practical financial matters, he would certainly never accept authority in spiritual and educational matters!

This rejection sparked a terrible storm that swirled about Pines. At the heart of the controversy was the old yishuv’s slanderous accusation to the Turkish administration that Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and his father-in-law had called upon the Jewish community in Palestine to rebel against the government (December 1893). This lie led to the arrest of Ben-Yehuda and the closure of the *HaZvi* newspaper. Pines could not overlook this offense, not only because of his friendship with Ben-Yehuda but also because any involvement of the Turkish authorities in internal Jewish battles was abhorrent to him.³³

PINES TURNS AGAINST THE NEW YISHUV

In 1894 he returned to Jerusalem and, to earn a living, accepted an administrative post at Bikkur Ḥolim Hospital where his friend of many years, Y.M. Solomon, was the director as representative of the Committee of Kollelim. Pines’s residence in Jerusalem and his employment in an old yishuv institution willy-nilly brought him closer to that very society which had vented its anger on him twelve years before.

Pines then joined the fray *against* the new yishuv in general and the Bnei Moshe in particular some two months after it had begun, perhaps following the publication of Aḥad Ha‘Am’s article “The Torah of the Heart” (*Tora ShebeLev*) which was probably written in reaction to Ben-Yehuda’s imprisonment.³⁴ In his most mordant and polemical style, Pines mercilessly attacked Aḥad Ha‘Am and the Bnei Moshe, the Odessa Committee, and the leaders of Hovevei Zion, although he continued to adhere to and support the movement’s ideals. In Jerusalem, Pines tried to organize a new Hovevei Zion group composed solely of Orthodox Jews, an idea which had been raised before the Kattowitz Conference and rejected. In a series of pamphlets titled “Truth from the Land of Israel”, which were distributed throughout the Jewish world, and especially in Eastern Europe, Pines waged his war with Aḥad Ha‘Am, the Bnei Moshe, and their defenders among the Hovevei Zion rabbis, Shmuel Mohilewer and

David Slouschz of Odessa. Once again, Pines did not fight the battle single-handedly, but led a group which had earlier demanded the reform of the old yishuv — Y.D. Frumkin, Y.M. Solomon, Z. Jawitz, and A. Ben-Tovim. These men not only talked Zionism, but lived it. They dubbed themselves “The Shields of the Earth” (*Maginei 'Areṣ*). Y. Rivlin and Rabbi S. Salant joined them; both had befriended Pines upon his arrival in Palestine fifteen years earlier. Dr. A. Mazi'a, who took an independent stand on contemporary issues in Palestine, also supported Pines, as did the Rabbi of Jaffa, N.H. HaLevi who was an eye witness to events in the new yishuv in Jaffa and the colonies.

Pines once again proclaimed his loyalty to Ḥovevei Zion in particular and to Jewish nationalism in general in a series of programmatic, ideological declarations that recalled *Yaldei Ruḥi* and other earlier articles. Pines rejected the separation of religion and nationality, or the relegation of religion to a mere function of nationality, as Aḥad Ha'Am had done. While the national return to the Land of Israel would indeed rectify the defects that had plagued Jewish society during its long exile, it did not provide an escape from anti-Semitism, as Pinsker and Lilienblum thought, nor was it a refuge for oppressed and afflicted Jews as Rabbis Mohilewer and Spector claimed. Nor was Pines swept up in the messianic hopes attached to the settlement of the Land of Israel, vestiges of which were apparent in the writings of the rabbis of the previous generation and in such contemporary rabbis as Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin of Volozhin and G. Jaffe of Yehud (formerly of Rozhinoy). Rather, Pines linked religious *nationalist* revival to the settlement of the Holy Land. By the 1890s he was no longer the only one to hold this view; it had already been put forward by Rabbis Y.Y. Reines and M. Eliasberg. “The Law of Israel for the People of Israel in the Land of Israel” later became the slogan of the Mizrahi movement.

At that time proposals were made for settling the Jews in Russia or aiding their emigration to America in order to solve the “Jewish problem”. The plan to settle Jews in Argentina also raised high hopes. Pines called for the support of every Jew who wished to emigrate to Argentina, but reserved the right to select those who would settle in Palestine, as Aḥad Ha'am had also advocated: “Not only have we the right to select them, but it is our duty to do this. Not everyone who wants to join a settlement can do so.” Those invited to settle in Palestine must be “persons who are devoted heart and soul to this land and love it not for the fruits of Ginosar, but for its national sacredness.” Pines voiced these views before the controversy of 1894-1896,³⁵ and reiterated them during these years. As for the Bilu movement, Pines then believed “in the power of the commandment to settle the Land of Israel because it would eventually restore those who had been expelled to the pasture of Torah and the commandments.” The Bnei Moshe, on the other hand, turn their “secu-

larism" into a basic doctrine, "and at the breast of this doctrine they are supposed to nourish a future generation."³⁶

Pines stated that whatever Orthodox and "liberal" members of the nationalist movement once had in common had now vanished, and hence he concluded: "Let there be no strife between us, for we are brothers. [However] separate yourselves from us whether to the right or the left."³⁷ This controversy had numerous consequences; the polarization of the old and new settlers, the estrangement of many Orthodox Jews from Hovevei Zion, the disintegration of the Bnei Moshe and of the Community Committee (*Va'ad HaKehilla*) in Jaffa which was constituted of all the ideological groups and was to have served as a unifying example for the Jewish communities of other cities. The man who had invested so much of his energies in this committee was Y.M. Pines.³⁸ And now Pines was separating himself from Hovevei Zion with which he had been so closely identified and which he had represented in Palestine for so many years.

Members of the new yishuv, especially the Bnei Moshe, went to great lengths in an attempt to isolate Pines from the old yishuv. They were even willing to sign a peace agreement with leaders of the old yishuv and to call for a moratorium on the public fight between them, for they held that Pines and his circle (Frumkin, Solomon, etc.) threatened the future of the new yishuv.³⁹ Pines felt that this agreement was doomed to fail, for it only obscured the fundamental differences between the two parties. The representatives of the old yishuv who were interested in the agreement for reasons of their own, and whose signatures were indispensable to its success, were Y. Rivlin, Y.M. Solomon, and Rabbi S. Salant, all supporters of Pines. And his opponents in the Diskin camp could never become genuine allies of the new yishuv. Thus, though the agreement was signed, it had the negative consequences which Pines had foreseen.⁴⁰

With the establishment of the Zionist Organization, Pines cautiously and half-heartedly approached the new movement along with several members of his circle.⁴¹ However, when the "liberal" tendencies of the new organization became apparent, after the Second and Fifth Zionist Congresses, Pines became estranged from it. He ceased to be active in local Zionist groups in Palestine, though he appeared at a conference in Zikhron Ya'akov in 1903 and even prepared a lecture on the development of the Jewish community in Palestine,⁴² perhaps in order to create a rival framework to that of the Zionist Organization, an initiative which the Zikhron Ya'akov group quashed.

Pines nonetheless continued to work with the institutions of the new yishuv, helping to establish the National Library, serving on the Hebrew Language Committee (*Va'ad HaLashon HaIvrit*), and teaching in the Ezra Teachers Seminary in Jerusalem.

It may be said that Pines was a victim of his own principles. He

lacked the philosophical framework of Rabbis Mohilewer, Reines, and Kook which enabled them to be members of a Zionist Organization dominated by non-observant Jews. Hence he estranged himself from the new Zionist nationalism and was pushed towards the world of the old yishuv which had been fighting him for a quarter of a century.⁴³ But Pines was a man of principle and intellectual integrity who continued to attract even his strongest opponents in the secular Zionist camp long after his death in 1913.⁴⁴

BEN GURION UNIVERSITY

Translated by Carol Kutscher.

NOTES

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1. Y.M. Pines, "The Condition of the Jews among the Nations," *HaMeliz* 1867, nos. 16-18. See notes by "Erez" (Zederbaum) refuting Pines's view, *ibid.* 19.

2. Pines, "Educational Methods for the Children of our People, and what the People Requires of its Rabbis," *HaMeliz* 1867, nos. 35-36, 39-40.

3. Pines, "Dear *Meliz*," *HaMeliz* 1868, no. 1.

4. Pines, "Reply to the Previous Letter," *HaMeliz* 1869, nos. 24-26.

5. Pines, "On the Cultivation of the Land," *HaKarmel* 1868, nos. 27-28.

6. Pines, *HaMaggid* 1869, no. 13; see also *HaKarmel*, *ibid.*

7. Pines, "A Reply . . ." (above, no. 4).

8. Yosef Zekharia Stern, "Wise Men, Take Care what you Say," *HaLevanon* 1870, no. 3.

9. Pines, "An Open Letter," *HaLevanon* 1871, no. 11.

10. See "The Doctrine of Noah," *HaMeliz* 1871, no. 3.

11. Y.Z. Stern, (above, no. 8).

12. See *Letters of M.L. Lilienblum to Y.L. Gordon*, (ed.) S. Breimann (Jerusalem, 1968), letter dated May 13, 1871, p. 120. See also letters dated August 19, 1870, p. 102, October 11, 1870, p. 104. See Lilienblum's letter to Pines of July 12, 1870, "The Sins of Youth," in *The Complete Letters of Lilienblum* (Krakow, 1912), p. 336. See also Lilienblum, *Biographical Writings*, Vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1970), p. 41; Y. Margalioth, *Ma'oz HaTalmud* (Warsaw, 1869), pp. 12-13; Pines, "Replies to Evil Persons," *HaLevanon* 1869, no. 45; "War of Duty," *HaLevanon* 1870, no. 10.

13. "Moses Montefiore and the Holy Land," *HaLevanon* 1875, no. 23.

14. See "On Labor, Handicrafts, and the Yishuv in Erez Israel," *Havazzelet* 1875, no. 17; "The Tower of Lebanon Overlooking Jerusalem," *HaLevanon* 1875 (11), no. 32.

15. Pines, "Concerning the Settlement of Erez-Israel," *HaLevanon* 1875 (11), nos. 35-36. See also "May They Prosper who Love You!" *HaLevanon* 1875 (12), no. 9.

16. Pines continued to concern himself with the social problems of Russian Jewry although apparently he became estranged from *HaMeliz* over the issue of agricultural settlement in Russia or America. See his article on the rabbinate, "The Rabbinate on *Even HaLeqah*," *HaLevanon* 1875 (12), nos. 3-4; "A Generation and its Leaders," *HaLevanon* 1876 (13), nos. 1-4.

17. Y. Lifschitz, "Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem," *HaLevanon* 1875 (11), nos. 42-44. Lifschitz maintained that Palestine should be settled by Oriental Jews who were experienced in farming.

18. Yosef Rivlin, "Jerusalem," *HaLevanon* 1875 (11), no. 44.

19. Pines, "A Word to my Adversaries," *HaLevanon* 1875 (11), no. 50; "May They Prosper who Love You!," *ibid.*, no. 9.

20. See the Committee's statement, *HaMaggid* 1876, no. 20.

21. See "Another Word on the Settlement of Erez Israel," *HaLevanon* 1875, no. 44.

22. For the entire affair of Pines's appointment and those who recommended him see G. Kressel, *Yehiel Michael Pines* (Tel Aviv, 1946), pp. 21-22. See also *HaLevanon* 1876 (13), no. 12. His supporters included the editors of *HaLevanon* and *HaMaggid*, and Y.L. Gordon. Pines was selected from a large number of candidates. The selection committee published its choice without citing Pines's name: "A respected man with many fine qualities and traits." *HaLevanon* described Pines in flowery language: "The man who is 'distinguished among ten thousands', in whom Torah, wisdom, faith, and knowledge go hand in hand with love and peace, and who is accomplished both in the realm of the intellect and in that of practical affairs . . . from what we have heard, almost all the greatest Jewish leaders in Russia and Poland entreated the committee to appoint the *Gaon* (genius) Yehiel Michael Pines . . ." In his youth, Pines learned German and Russian from private tutors. See "My Life," *HaTor* 1926, no. 16.

23. Pines, "On the Rumor about the Purchase of Erez Israel," *HaLevanon* 1876 (13), no. 11.

24. To judge from Pines's mandate from the committee to look for lands for farming and build houses for the poor, Montefiore's approach apparently prevailed. See Pines, *The Building of the Land*, Vol. 2, Book 1 (Tel Aviv, 1938), pp. 20-24.

25. See Y. Sapir, "Authors' Letters," *HaLevanon* 1878, no. 11. Sapir reports that he was warmly received, but this should not be considered completely accurate as it was intended to demonstrate to the Jews of the Diaspora the good will of the community in Palestine.

26. On this development see E. Deinard, *A Journey to the East* (Pressburg, 1883), pp. 38-39.

27. See Ita Yellin, *For My Offspring*, Vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1938), pp. 34, 45, 52, 54.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65; Y.M. Pines, *Tables of the Testimony* (Jerusalem, n.d.), pp. 1-9.

29. See *Palestine Almanac*, 1912, (ed.) A.M. Luncz (Jerusalem, 1911), pp. 36-37.

30. H.N. Bialik, "Y.M. Pines and his Literary Activity," *HaZeman* 1913, no. 82; Bialik, "On the Death of Y.M. Pines," *Devarim Shebe'al Peh* (Tel Aviv, 1935).

31. See Yosef Salmon, "The Confrontation between Orthodox Jews and Enlightenment in the *Hibbat Zion* Movement," *HaZionut*, Vol. 5 (Tel Aviv, 1978), pp. 61-70.

32. Pines expressed ideas similar to those of the *Bnei Moshe* in 1886. See I. Klausner, *BeDarkhei Zion* (Jerusalem, 1978), pp. 374-375.

33. See Pines's letter to Rivlin, CZA (Central Zionist Archive) A192/236; H. Ben-Yehuda, *Ben-Yehuda: His Life and Work* (Jerusalem, 1940), pp. 122-123.
34. Rivlin's letter to Pines, CZA A109/55/2.
35. See Pines's letter to Rabbi Yom Tov Lippmann HaKohen in Z. Yavetz, *Pri Ha'Arez*, Vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1892).
36. *Emet Me'Erez* (Jerusalem, 1894), Vol. 1, pp. 7, 9; 2, pp. 4-5.
37. *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 7-9, 17, 23; 3, pp. 11-12, 28-30.
38. Ruth Kark, "Jaffa—The Social and Cultural Center of the New Jewish Settlement in Palestine," *The Jerusalem Cathedra*, Vol. 3 (Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 215-217.
39. CZA A35/14/1, p. 153, no. 44.
40. See Y. Kaniel, "Rabbi Yosef Rivlin and the Executive Committee of the *Hovevei Zion* in Jaffa," *Vatikin* (Ramat Gan, 1975), pp. 187-231; see letters 1-5.
41. Haya Har'el, "The Zionist Movement and the *Yishuv*," in *The First 'Aliya* (Jerusalem, 1982), p. 386; Klausner, *BeDarkhei Zion* (above, n. 32), p. 330.
42. David Yellin, *Selected Writings* (Jerusalem, 1936), p. 326.
43. Matters reached such a pass that when, after the death of Y. Rivlin, secretary of the General Committee, Y.M. Pines was a candidate for the position, he was rejected because of pressure from the religious fanatics. See Y. Shiryon, *Memoirs* (Jerusalem, 1943), p. 84.
44. See Y. Markowitz, *Yehiel Michael Pines. His Life, Times, and Work* (unpublished dissertation, Yeshiva University, New York, 1974), pp. 135ff.