

PREFACE

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From a historical perspective, the concept of diaspora is inextricably bound up with the fate of the Jewish people after the destruction of the Second Temple. The term diaspora is used to describe population groups with certain common features, that live among majority groups with different characteristics, and preserve a real or symbolic tie to the place they consider their physical and spiritual homeland. The formation of diasporas is almost always related to voluntary or enforced emigration.

The above notwithstanding, the recognition that the diasporic situation was, and is, the heritage of many diverse population groups throughout history is not new. In recent years, there has been an upsurge in studies dealing with specific diasporas, or proposing diaspora theories. The research on this subject focuses on the motives for the formation of diasporas, and on the behavior of their members, and gives much room to the classification of the various types of diasporas. The reason why this branch of research has become so popular is because, in the Age of Globalization, the diasporic experience has become a global reality. In view of the above, it has become necessary to identify the common denominators between the various diaspora populations, and in particular, the options that the future holds for them. The tension between the problems emigration created, and the solutions it offered was a major factor in the upsurge of interest in diasporas and emigration.

A comparison between the Jewish and Greek diasporas is particularly significant in terms of their antiquity and length, their common existential space, and the feedback and clashes between them, but especially because of the different way in which they perceived their origins. These opposing perceptions may indicate that not all types of diaspora can be examined under the same microscope.¹ However, a detailed study of the history of these two diasporas shows otherwise. Perceptions and conventions exist on one side of the scale, while reality exists independently on the other

side of the scale. These two nations, despite their differences, still share much in common.

This book is an attempt to take a step further toward the interpretation of one of the most ancient historical social phenomena — emigration and diaspora.

For about a thousand years, from Alexander Macedon's conquest until the Muslim conquests, the Jewish people in Israel and the diaspora formed an integral part of the Hellenistic world, and adopted its language and many of its social perceptions [Kasher, "The Jewish *Politeuma* in Alexandria"]. And yet, paradoxically, from the Hellenistic period on, the Jews perceived the Greek way of life as the polar opposite of their way of life, and this perception survived throughout Jewish history. A Jew who adopted behaviors or thoughts of another group, be it a religion or any system that challenged the contemporary fundamentals of normative Judaism, was termed a "Hellenizer," irrespective of the ethnic origins of the group in question. This internal contradiction had its own internal logic. The more the Jews integrated into Hellenistic culture, the more they needed to assert their separate identity, before it was swallowed up totally in the Greek one. At the same time, Hellenistic culture absorbed many elements from the eastern world it had conquered. In the final analysis, it rejected the pagan religion on which it was based, and adopted a religious formula that was based on the Jewish monotheistic heritage. It, too, felt a need to separate from the culture whose treasures it had absorbed, before it lost its distinctiveness. Even metaphorically, these two nations were considered polar opposites: The Jews were perceived as the "People of the Book," while the Greeks were perceived as the "People of the Sea." Although these metaphors evolved only in the nineteenth century, they are based on a certain historical reality [Rozen, "People of the Book, People of the Sea"]. More importantly, the Jewish diaspora was perceived in Jewish culture, and later in Western culture in general, as a punishment for sin: "Because of our sins we were exiled from our land." [from the Jewish festival liturgy]. The Jewish diasporic condition was considered, therefore, a temporary condition that would end once the sin that caused it was atoned for and the age of divine redemption had been ushered in [Oded, "Exile — The Biblical Perspectives"]. The Greek diaspora, on the other hand, was perceived by its culture as a great settlement initiative, an act of renewal and adventure that brought with it prestige and honor, and that was commanded and blessed by the gods. From an ideological perspective, it was not a temporary condition but rather a process that aimed to spread the Greek way of life and culture throughout the world. Nor was there any need for divine intervention to bring it to an end. Rather, its end was contingent on human choice [Doukellis, "Between Greek Colony and Mother-City: Some Reflections"; Rozen, "People of the Book, People of the Sea"].

A deeper study of the evolution and history of the Jewish and Greek diasporas shows that they had as many similarities as differences. The

biblical account of the formation of the Jewish people opens with a story that is, if anything, redolently "Greek." God orders the patriarch Abraham to leave his home and land of his birth and go to another land, where a marvelous fate awaits him! The earliest Jewish emigration from the Land of Israel was that of Jewish soldiers who went to serve an Egyptian king. It predated the destruction of the First Temple, was not entirely an enforced diaspora, and was certainly not a punishment for sin. Indeed, this diaspora through the ages was not always a product of need, but also of choice. Conversely, the Greek diaspora was not simply the decision of brave adventurers whom the gods sent on perilous journeys, but also the result of banishment from their cities for various, mostly negative, reasons. In both cultures, a tension exists between the pull of "the old country" and that of the new. Both cultures experience this tension as painful, irrespective of whether the emigration was inspired by positive or negative reasons. The intensity and duration of this tension is what effectively determined the length of the diaspora. The antithesis of *diaspora*, which is a Greek term invented by the translators of the Bible into Greek (the Septuagint), is the Greek term *khora*, the place, homeland. When the emigrant's feeling of foreignness (*xeniteia*), evaporates, and he is no longer overwhelmed by nostalgia for the old world, but rather considers it as more symbolic than real, the diaspora begins its transition into *khora*, until the "old country" is totally absorbed into the clouds of distant memory [Rozen, "People of the Book, People of the Sea"].

The above is true both for Jewish and Greek diasporas, and for all other diasporas, too. The Samaritan exiles exist only in the Jewish historical memory. Anyone who may have inherited their genes would be currently living in Iraq without any inkling of their connection to the Kingdom of Samaria. Similarly, the Poseidonians of old exist only in the Greek historical memory. The inhabitants of Sicily and southern Italy know nothing about them, unless they studied archeology or classics at university [Rozen, "People of the Book, People of the Sea"]. My friend D. S., who lives in a green suburb of Philadelphia, is the great grandson of a rabbi from Gallipoli. Although he is very interested in investigating his Jewish and Sephardic origins, he is a dyed-in-the-wool American. He has never visited Israel, Turkey or Spain, and I doubt he ever will. His grandchildren will have no recollection of anything other than their American way of life. They may possibly belong to a local reform community that may have some kind of link with the State of Israel, reminding them of a remote, very remote, past that almost certainly will be entirely irrelevant to them. If my friend D.S. represents the metamorphosis of the Jewish diaspora, then A.D., whom I met at Moscow airport in the winter of 1993, represents the metamorphosis of the Greek diaspora. At the sound of his very Greek-sounding name, I questioned him on his Greek past. He informed me that his great great grandfather had indeed moved from Izmir to Odessa when Catherine the Great founded the city and welcomed anyone who wished to settle

there [Kardasis, "The Greek Diaspora in Southern Russia"]. He did not know any Greek, he admitted, and what little he knew about his Greek identity was from family traditions only. As far as he was concerned, he was a Russian from Odessa. Of course, the descendants of D.S. from Philadelphia may well discover a link between their Jewish roots and the State of Israel if drastic changes in the United States force them to, provided the State of Israel continues to be a viable option, just as happened with Argentinian Jewry under the Colonels' Regime [Zadoff, "Center and Diaspora in the Struggle for Human Rights"]. Similarly, Greece's entry into the European Union and the relaxation of its immigration laws may encourage A. D. from Odessa, or his children, to emigrate to Greece and rediscover their Greek roots — a not uncommon phenomenon in the history of diasporas [Weiss, "Breaks and Continuities in German-Jewish Identity"]. Diasporas — rather like amoeba — evolve, mutate, take on different forms, live, die, and are resurrected — depending on the needs of those who use them as survival tools. For diasporas are social survival tools.

Diasporas are the product of emigration. Theoreticians of emigration have developed the "push-pull" theory, whereby the emigrant is either "pushed out" of his country for negative reasons or "pulled in" by the new country for positive reasons (the lure of economic and professional opportunities, freedom of religion etc.). In actual fact, as is so often the case in human behavior, the two motives may coexist. The four horsemen of the Apocalypse and their associates have always been a driving force behind diasporas. A systematic analysis of the migratory patterns of Greeks and Jews throughout history shows that, the aforementioned ideological disparity notwithstanding, they were effectively guided by the same motives, albeit at different times. Famine and food shortages have always been primary motives for emigration, creating in their wake a cluster of subsidiary motives that may be defined in different ways. Classical Greece, like modern Greece, has always found it hard to feed its citizens from its homegrown produce. Therefore, food shortages were the main impetus behind the migratory movement in classical Greece, as in modern Greece, at least until the late 1960s. This picture is no less true for the Jewish diaspora. The story of Jacob and his sons who went down to Egypt to buy food has been reenacted throughout Jewish history. Jewish settlement in the Greco-Roman world was not only prompted by the attraction of living in a vast cultural space that provided a comfortable "existential climate," but also by the population growth in the Land of Israel, that made it hard to earn a living. The large late-nineteenth-century emigration of Jews from Eastern Europe to the New World was motivated by hunger, as was the emigration of other ethnic groups from Eastern Europe to America. This hunger was linked, in the case of the Jews, to a strong sense of existential pressure anchored in political and cultural factors. However, pressures of this sort alone, which had been their heritage for centuries, had not, hitherto, been sufficient to drive out

millions of East European Jews. The horsemen of the Apocalypse were riding together.

Natural disasters were another common motivation for mass emigration, although the impetus to emigrate was always accompanied by other, related, motives. The decline of Minoan culture in Crete is attributed to a volcanic eruption that took place in the early seventeenth century BCE in the island of Thera (Santorini). This event made it possible for Mycenaean culture to replace Minoan culture in the mid-fifteenth-century BCE. But what made the Mycenaeans set sail for Crete, Cyprus, and Cilicia in the first place? Was it the same impetus that led Greeks to migrate throughout the generations, namely, shortage of food? Or perhaps a foreign invasion? And why did the Mycenaeans set sail from the Mediterranean islands and Asia Minor to the shores of Canaan in the twelfth century BCE? Trying to steer a path through the labyrinths of these remote and obscure periods, over which various schools of scholars argue, can be extremely frustrating to those seeking unambiguous answers to human motivation. Even a comparative study of the recent or immediate past presents a very complex and varied picture that does not easily lend itself to analysis, let alone systemization.

Skipping to the Middle Ages, the extension of the Jewish diaspora from the Mediterranean basin to western and central Europe is usually attributed to persecution, discrimination, massacres and expulsions. A comparative study calls for a broader perspective that may include environmental factors, such as climate changes. The warming of Europe in the ninth to eleventh centuries created a favorable climate for people who were used to a warm climate. The pleasant weather triggered an immense population growth in these regions. Conversely, the extreme cooling down of the European continent from the twelfth century on, as well as its overpopulation, rendered Europeans less tolerant toward foreigners as well as to their compatriots. This was almost certainly one of the contributory factors to the Crusades — an event that was particularly traumatic for the Jewish communities of France and the Rhineland, propelling their surviving populations eastwards.

While such factors have been inadequately addressed in the research literature, others, such as political instability, have been stressed time and time again. Although political instability was a contributory factor to migration in both cultures throughout their history, ironically, political stability was also a cause of migration. The existence of large empires (the Roman, Ottoman, Austrian and Russian empires) that remained politically stable for centuries encouraged the internal migration of Jews and Greeks, simply because this proved easy. On the other hand, even large empires suffer periods of instability that serve as catalysts for the migration of minorities from them. Greeks emigrated from the Ottoman empire long before the classical age of migration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, because of a feeling of oppression and insecurity in their places of residence, as did their brethren who lived in the

Venetian Republic [Papadia-Lala "Collective Expatriations of Greeks in the Fifteenth Through Seventeenth Centuries"].

The disintegration of the large empires in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries placed tremendous pressure on their populations, but mainly on populations that were identified by the majority population as having foreign ties. This pressure was reflected in discriminatory legislation, persecutions, and finally actual expulsions.

Pleasant weather was not the only positive force that led people to leave their homes and countries for foreign pastures. The promise of job opportunities (labor migration) was commonplace in both the old and new worlds, for Jews and Greeks alike. Jewish mercenaries who served the kings of Egypt in the seventh century BCE were not expelled from their country, but simply found Egypt a pleasant place to work. Greek merchants who settled in Odessa in the late eighteenth century were not expelled from Izmir, but were lured by the economic opportunities offered by the recently opened free port of Odessa, and its potential as a trade link between the Ottoman Empire and Czarist Russia (a potential they exploited) [Kardasis, "The Greek Diaspora in Southern Russia in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries"]. Their brothers who settled in the same period in Vienna, serving as a link between Vienna and Istanbul, were governed by the same motives [Katsiardi-Hering, "Central and Peripheral Communities in the Greek Diaspora"; Serenidou, "The 'Old' Diaspora, the 'New' Diaspora, and the Greek Diaspora in Eighteenth through Nineteenth Centuries Vienna"].

Sometimes, the push-pull forces operate simultaneously, as in the case of the mass immigration to the New World — the land of unlimited opportunities. Europe pushed its citizens out, while America pulled them in, with promises of prosperity and freedom.

One of the by-products of emigration and diasporas is the transmission of goods, means and ideas. Since emigrants usually perceive themselves, and are perceived by their hosts, as inferior, the fact that emigration is one of the most powerful means for the distribution of goods, inventions, ways of life and ideas throughout the world and for the cross-fertilization of human cultures, is often overlooked. The emigrant always has something new to offer his host environment, something it has not yet encountered, and for which it will henceforth find new uses, thereby enriching its culture immeasurably. Jews and Greeks are no exceptions. Indeed, they more than any other diaspora, have been "responsible" for the distribution of goods, material culture, ideas, innovations and inventions throughout the world, perhaps simply because they preserved their culture so much longer than others. The arrival of the sea peoples on the shores of Canaan brought with it a new, hitherto unknown, culture — one that built cities, made clay and iron tools, and embraced new myths and new patterns of thinking. The armies of Alexander Macedon disseminated Greek taste, culture and thought wherever they went, throughout the world. When they returned to their country of

origin, they brought with them new gods, new ways of life, and new attitudes toward life and death, that transformed the world from which they had set out to conquer the east. Similarly, the Returnees to Zion, who may be considered emigrants of sorts, brought with them a wealth of revolutionary ideas garnered from Zoroastrian culture: a dialectic perception of the world, evil as an immanent force, eternal life, the next world, reward and punishment, and similar ideas that in turn were taken from Judaism and transmitted through it to Christianity. The Jewish diaspora in Syria and Asia Minor was the conduit whereby Christianity advanced northwards and westward, while the Greek monks brought it to the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

In a similar vein, the intellectual treasures of Greek philosophy that might have been lost when Justinianus closed the Academy of Athens (529 CE), were preserved through their Arabic and Hebrew translation. Aristotle's doctrine was preserved thanks to the commentary of the Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (1126–1198), who used the Hebrew translation of excerpts of Aristotle's doctrine. And so on. In the court of Ferdinand II (1194–1250) of Naples Ibn Rushd's commentary was translated into Hebrew by Jacob Anatoli (1194–1258) and at the same time and place, perhaps in collaboration, it was translated into Latin by Michael Scotus (1175–1235). Subsequently, Aristotle's doctrine penetrated Judeo-Christian western culture.

Another by-product of emigration and diaspora was the creation of trade networks, that were first and foremost ethnic-based, and in many cases, also family-based. This was an extremely common characteristic of the Jewish diaspora from the Muslim conquests on, and of the Greek diaspora after 1453. From the sixteenth century on, following the globalization of international trade (as a result of the Great Discoveries, and later, of European colonialization), Greek and Jewish trade networks penetrated all corners of the globe.

These networks created groups of extremely affluent people, who understood that in order for their businesses to succeed, their manpower required an education that was suited to their needs, and that was not provided by standard education until the eighteenth century. The main requirement was a knowledge of foreign languages — the key to acquiring new ideas. This paved the way for educational reform and nationalism [Exertzoglou, "Reconstituting Community: Cultural Differentiation and Identity Politics in Christian Orthodox Communities during the Late Ottoman Era"].

An issue that acquired added significance with the growth of nationalism was that of the relationship between center and diaspora. This problem was not new. Already in antiquity, the relationship between center and diaspora was ambivalent, a push-pull dichotomy of yearning and rejection, that usually turned the center and the longing for it into a symbol, if it had not yet been forgotten. In the interval between emigration and the total loss of ties with the "old country," the emigrant

feels a range of different emotions of varying degrees of intensity toward his place of origin. Economic and spiritual prosperity in the place(s) of emigration in both diasporas created a multitude of new centers of ethnic-cultural existence, so much so that one wonders if there was actually a center and a diaspora, or rather a scattering of centers and secondary centers. The Jewish diaspora turned Jerusalem into a symbolic center that had no practical significance until the age of nationalism. The Greek diaspora never had an acknowledged center. It was an entire world, with a solid hub in Asia Minor and in the Middle East, and ever broadening margins toward North Africa and the Danubian states, and ultimately to all reaches of the world. A Greek was someone who spoke Greek, and led a Greek — originally pagan, and then Greek Orthodox — way of life. He was first and foremost defined by his place of birth. The architects of the Greek national movement were forced to relate to the question of “center,” and it was they who metaphorically resurrected the two-headed eagle. This time, one of the eagles represented Athens — the classical heritage that was absorbed by Western Europe and re-exported to the disintegrating Ottoman empire — and the other, Constantinople — the symbol of Christian Greece that became the capital of that empire. At a certain historical moment, the Jewish and the Greek diasporas intersected at a point where each had to turn an imaginary idea into an earthly capital.

The fall of Constantinople into Ottoman hands, and its transformation into the center of the subject Greek nation, bestowed upon it several of the features of captured Jerusalem. There was one enormous difference, however. Constantinople, unlike Jerusalem, was a real metropolis (albeit the Greeks lacked sovereignty over it), while Jerusalem remained an imaginary one. Although the Greeks, like the Jews, would, theoretically, have liked to turn the wheels of history back, they accommodated themselves to the reality of the times. Interestingly, both diasporas devised extremely similar theological and moral justifications for this accommodation [Rozen, “People of the Book, People of the Sea”; Ravitzky, “A Land Adored Yet Feared: The Land of Israel in Jewish Tradition”].

Modern nationalism rendered the problem more acute. It demanded identification of a center, loyalty toward it, and action on its behalf. The process of “reinventing” a center followed similar patterns in both diasporas: The incubation of the national idea in the diaspora, far from the center it recreated; the role of the bourgeoisie, first in fostering the idea, and later, in financing it; the process of recreation, that included, as with other nationalist movements, the revival of traditions and memories, with an emphasis on memories that served the idea; and, finally, a phenomenon that was unique to the national revival of these two cultures, “the adaptation” of the language to the national idea. In the case of the Greeks, this was extremely difficult because the language had evolved in different places in different ways, so that a compromise had to be

found between the linguistic present and the classical past to which the Greeks sought to harness their heritage. In the Jewish case, this was simpler, since Hebrew had been a dead language for many generations, in certain cases probably since the Hellenistic period. The language was resurrected on the basis of written literature, biblical language, and Mishnaic language. In both diasporas, and in the two nation-states they established, a deliberate effort was made "to reeducate" a population that was too poor or too ignorant to constitute "suitable material" for the national project. In both cases, a dab of democracy was stirred into the nationalist brew, despite the fact that both were bourgeois projects.

In both cases, the diaspora was a survival tool, and in both cases, the national idea represented a different kind of survival tool. The Greek national idea was mainly an attempt to exploit a window of opportunities — an idea that seemed feasible given the decline of The Ottoman Empire. Like many human endeavors, it cost more money and blood than its architects imagined, and produced fewer results than they had hoped. Although the Jewish national idea was also a dangerous venture, it was not an attempt to exploit a window of opportunities but rather a rescue venture. As long as there were other survival options, the idea was controversial. When all other doors were closed, it became the only option.

The two new nation-states entertained the illusion that they could resurrect their idyllic pasts in all their glory. The Greeks paid the price of this illusion in 1922. We are still paying the price, on a daily basis. And the ledger is still open and the hand still records...

The two new nation-states entertained certain aspirations concerning those they considered a legitimate target of the national project. The State of Israel was created as a refuge for all persecuted Jews, although it aspired, for quite a significant period of its history, to absorb as many Jews as possible, even if they came from places where they were not persecuted. This was a function of its need to create a Jewish majority in a state with a significant Arab population. In Greece, there were no such initiatives. Until the 1990s, Greece was always a place from which people emigrated, rather than one to which they immigrated. Nevertheless, the two states undertook identical measures to place obstacles in the way of population groups they identified as incompatible with the national project, or, at the very least, to force them to be part of it. Both states have a "Law of Return" that awards citizenship to anyone who "is compatible" with the nation-state, without the obstacles others face.

At this juncture, the issue of center and diaspora resurfaces. Even before the establishment of the Greek and Jewish nation-states, the subject of center and diaspora was problematic. Despite and along with the consolidation of the national idea, at least until the 1960s, any Greek considered himself simply a member of the place, village or city where he was born. In most cases, his Greek identity was determined by this place. If he emigrated, he emigrated from that place, which then became "the

center" for which he yearned. The Jewish nineteenth-century emigrant, however, did not emigrate from Jerusalem or from Eretz Israel. He emigrated from one diaspora to another. Like the Greek emigrant, who did not identify with Athens or Constantinople (unless he came from one of these cities), the Jewish emigrant did not focus on the symbolic center to which he had prayed for generations, but to the actual place from which he had emigrated [Refael, "Spain, Greece or Jerusalem? The Yearning for the Motherland in the Poetry of Greek Jews"; Rozen, "People of the Book, People of the Sea"]. The loyalty and affiliation of the Greek and Jewish diaspora to their new nation-states, even as they emerged, created new and awkward problems. The Greek communities of Alexandria, Istanbul and Izmir, for example, were ten times larger, and materially and spiritually richer than Athens, the capital of the new nation-state. They had independent interests that were not always compatible with those of the nation-state. Although they rallied to the national cause, this could not always be taken for granted, and for a long time their centers competed with the young state. In a certain sense, the complex relationship between the nineteenth-century Greek diaspora and the emergent nation-state is comparable to the relationship between the large Jewish centers of Eastern Europe before the Holocaust, and of England and the USA, during and after it, to the Zionist enterprise. Before the Holocaust, the assumption prevailed in Eastern Europe that it was possible to maintain an autonomous Jewish nationalism within the geographical space of another nation — an assumption that grew into the idea of diasporic nationalism [Silber, "The Metamorphosis of Pre-Dubnovian Autonomism into Diaspora Jewish Nationalism"]. This idea is in some way reminiscent of the assumption that prevailed in some Greek communities in the Ottoman Empire in the course of the nineteenth century, that it was possible to exist as a national group within a state that was not necessarily the Greek nation-state.

However, even when this illusion was dashed, for the Greeks in the First World War, and for the Jews in the Second World War, the nation-state was not at the center of the collective experience. The Greeks emigrated from their state en masse in the years following the Second World War. Today, their descendants are returning to it, in order to study their grandparent's language, and to get to know "the old country". Their true homeland, however, is in the USA, Canada or Australia, as the case may be. In such a situation, it is hard to distinguish between center and diaspora. As for US Jewry, currently the largest and most affluent center of the Jewish diaspora, the establishment and existence of the State of Israel was important as a potential place of refuge, and also as a source of pride and self-esteem, but its attitude toward it has always been patronizing. The main focus of interest was in the new center that was set up in the USA, the New Babylon, in both senses of the word [Segev, "Does Money Talk? The Struggle between American Zionists and the Yishuv in the Early 1940s"].

The world at the end of the second and the start of the third millennia is a new world of new diasporas in which the flow is from poor countries to rich ones — a world I have termed “The West and the Rest.” These diasporas are transforming, and shall continue to transform, the image of the nation-state of these two ancient diasporas, and even the image of their diasporas. Although it is too early to mourn the passing of the nation-state, one might venture to say that it will, in the future, face some extremely trying ordeals. Sparsely populated Greece, with its negative natural increase and high standard of living is absorbing a growing number of immigrants of all colors and creeds. It needs them to do work that its well-fed citizens are not prepared to do. It needs them in order to survive. The monolithic picture that the Greek nation-state sought to create is becoming increasingly fractured. The Greeks rely, and to some extent justly so, on their culture that always excelled in assimilating foreigners, but this cannot always be the case. The Greek Orthodox Church, which, throughout its dominion, annexed masses of people who had no connection with Hellenism to the Greek culture, has almost completed the process of becoming Greece’s national church. In other words, Greek civilization has lost the tool (the church) whereby it expanded its spheres of influence [Roussos, “The Greek Orthodox Church Networks in the Near East and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism(1899–1947)”]. Greek identity is contingent on the Greek nation-state and those who feel a tie with it. When those in the Greek state who are not Greek Orthodox are not considered Greek, and when being Greek is still contingent on embracing the Greek Orthodox religion, assimilation will not succeed. Only the removal of this interdependency will allow such assimilation, but that would mean the emergence of an entirely new Greek, a being different to all Greeks since Constantine the Great (324 CE).

Unlike Greece, the State of Israel has no tradition of assimilating and absorbing foreigners (other than Jews). On the contrary, Jewish culture has, throughout history, repeatedly banished any “deviant” it feared might influence “normative” behavior. Like Greece, Israel too is undergoing a process of adaptation to the new millennium. The ongoing conflict with the Palestinians, that Israel’s continued sovereignty over Judea and Samaria has exacerbated, has created a state which, although national in definition, legislation, and behavior, in practice, will soon evolve into a binational state, barring an apocalyptic scenario that will reshuffle the cards. Already today the Israeli Law of Return enables thousands of non-Jews to obtain Israeli citizenship. Like in Greece, it serves as a magnet for thousands of foreign workers and illegal immigrants who wish to partake of its bounty. Some of these processes cannot be halted.

The Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel turned the diaspora into something negative and loathsome. The State’s consolidation and prosperity, as well as its rapid demographic growth

that has hardly left any green belts, and its economic and cultural integration into the postmodern space, have created two parallel and complementary trends. The first is the trend toward privatization. The State that was the supreme value, and that set itself up as the supreme value, is fast turning into (in fact has already turned into) a loose network of interest groups, each of which cares for its own interests [Gutwein, "Jewish Diaspora and the Privatization of Israeli Society"]. The second trend is taking place in the diaspora. The collapse of the Soviet Empire gave the State of Israel a massive demographic infusion, but this very infusion hastened the collapse of the monolithic cultural picture that the architects of the State had aspired to create. On the other hand, the collapse of the Soviet Empire allowed the resurrection of Jewish communities that had been wiped off the face of the earth. Although these communities feel a tie with Israel, many of their members consider them their natural place. This can hardly be termed exile [Weiss, "Breaks and Continuities in German-Jewish Identity"].² US Jewry, for its part, "is discovering itself" and creating a Jewish culture which, generally speaking, is radically different from that of the State of Israel, in the religious sense, too. Although its commitment to the State of Israel is extremely strong, it — like other ethnic groups in the USA — is increasingly directing its efforts toward consolidating its identity in the United States. In the best-case scenario, the proposed formula is one of "partnership of equals," rather than a mandatory center to whose existence the diaspora is committed at any cost, because it depends on it for its survival, or an absolute center that can impose its values, interests and wishes on the diaspora.³

In conclusion, diasporas are human inventions that can be understood only if studied along the entire time axis of their existence, or at least, as far back as we can go. We have no guarantee that we will ever completely understand this fascinating phenomenon. However, in order to approximate such an understanding, we must go from the particular to the general, sift through the generalizations, analyze them, and assess and reassess them, with extreme circumspection. Diasporas needs a center, whether fictitious or real, but the connection between them and the modern nation-state is a modern invention that is not necessarily viable. Thus, Kitromilides' article [Kitromilides, "Diaspora, Identity and Nation-building"] provides a fitting conclusion to this work.