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**Performing the State:
The Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the New York World's Fair, 1939/40**

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World's fairs became a prime site for transforming the Holy Land into the Jewish homeland. For most of the history of world's fairs, Jews were defined as a religious group and were included in parliaments, halls, temples, and exhibitions of religion. This was by no means the only context in which Jews might be found at world's fairs, but it was a particularly hospitable one because it let them perform an ideal of citizenship predicated on religious liberty.¹ With the rise of Jewish national aspirations, Zionists seized the opportunity afforded by the world's fair to promote a Jewish homeland in Palestine. If, in earlier fairs, the contest for Palestine was a struggle between Christians and Jews for the Holy Land, the competition for Palestine in later fairs was between Jews and Arabs for national sovereignty. By the 1930s the Zionist movement had succeeded in becoming the "official" national and international Jewish presence at the fair, nowhere more clearly than the Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1939/1940, which is my focus here.

I will argue that the Jewish Palestine Pavilion attempted to perform the state into being by exploiting the slippage between the world itself and the world of the fair to perform *de facto* statehood. By *world of the fair*, I mean first, an envisioned totality, and second, the idea of bringing the entire world into one space. By *performing the state into being*, I mean to distinguish the Pavilion itself as a "performance" within the theatre of the Fair, from the effects its organizers hoped it would have. The world of the Fair—and the Jewish Palestine Pavilion—could be said to be performative to the degree that they helped or hastened or even brought about that which they postulated. I am indebted here to J.L. Austin's notion of performative utterance in *How to Do Things with Words*.²

Those who organized the New York World's Fair (and those responsible for the Jewish Palestine Pavilion) expressed precisely this distinction—between performance and performative—in their own terms. Listen to Grover Whalen, President of the Fair Corporation (until the end of the 1939 season), characterizing the Fair in his autobiography some years later:

This then was the Fair—primarily a great theater. Not only the proscenium behind which a thousand entertainments might pass to delight the spectator, but also an amphitheater—vast enough, deep enough, distinguished enough to show the average man how the powers of the universe might be alerted to sustain and comfort him.³

The Fair was thus both a setting for performances, as in theatre or architecture, and it was a performance in its own right. But, Whalen goes further. Note the sequence of terms in the passage that he quotes from a brochure which promised that the Fair would *present* "a clear, unified, and comprehensive picture of...", *depict* the past, *show* "how the present has evolved out of the past," and *project* "the average man into the World of Tomorrow."⁴ This leads to the following: "By setting forth what has been beside what is, the Fair of 1939 will predict, may even dictate, the shape of things to come."⁵ The sequence of terms—present, depict, show, project, predict, dictate—shifts the ground from the *exhibition as performance* (as show) to the *performativity of*

exhibition (as action). Or, to use Austin's terms, it moves from a constative utterance (words that state) to a performative utterance (words that do).

This sequence—from showing to projecting to predicting to dictating—is at the heart of what might be called the agency of display. Display, particularly, was a critical tool in envisioning the planned world of tomorrow.⁶ The theme, "World of Tomorrow," referred to a world planned by architects, engineers, and designers—that is, a centrally planned though decentralized world. The two most dramatic examples at the Fair were Democracy and Futurama. Democracy was a garden city, with its urban business core (Centerton, surrounded by green countryside, and satellite towns, both residential (Pleasantvilles) and industrial (Millvilles). Democracy, the creation of a prominent industrial designer named Henry Dreyfuss, was a "symbol of a perfectly integrated, futuristic metropolis pulsing with life and rhythm and music. Futurama was the world in 1960, seen as if from an airplane. The featured exhibit of General Motors, Futurama promoted the automobile by showing what the world would look like when it was properly prepared through "super-highways, speed lanes, and multi-decked bridges."⁷ The style was streamlining.

This focus on a planned world of the future for the emphasis in exhibition theory and practice at the Fair on the "big picture," whether presented through photomurals, panoramas, dioramas, or scale models, resembled the approach that informed the design of the Jewish Palestine Pavilion. *Visual control of the whole was primary*. The generally unstated affinities between the total, the totalizing, and the totalitarian were everywhere on display at the Fair, from Democracy and Futurama to the Soviet and Italian pavilions.

Figure #1: "Palestine Exhibits Building," New York World's Fair, 1939/1940. Postcard.

"The nation is always a nation in a world of nations," argues Michael Billig.⁸ The Jewish state would exist as a unique instance of a universal phenomenon. David Ben Gurion expressed this ideal when he insisted that, "Two basic aspirations underlie all our work in this country: to be like all nations, and to be different from all nations."⁹ It is the task of world's fairs to create a virtual world of nations that not only incites the imaginative energies of nationalism, but also offers greater control over how nations present themselves to each other, particularly for those whose statehood has been abrogated or is yet to be achieved.. If, as Roland Robertson claims, "the idea of nationalism (or particularism) develops *only* in tandem with internationalism," then the agency of world's fairs lies precisely in how they configure and perform internationalism, understood as a "system, in which each state officially recognizes the internal sovereignty of its neighbours."¹⁰

Central to the internationalism of world's fairs is the "imagined universal code of nationhood," a modular system of pavilions, flags, anthems, insignia, uniforms, and the like.¹¹ Arranged in their own Government Zone, the states participating in the 1939/1940 New York World's Fair were arrayed, for the most part, around a Lagoon of Nations and in a Hall of Nations. They took their turns in a calendar of national days and weeks. Their copresence in the world of the fair, a highly charged space of diplomacy and propaganda, signaled their mutual recognition of each other's legitimacy. The issue of legitimacy became increasingly fraught with the widening gap between the status quo of the fair and the upheavals of the war. It is in this context that nations aspiring to statehood—or to regaining their sovereignty—sought the recognition of other states. The Jewish Palestine Pavilion was neither the first nor the last to use the world's fair in this way.

By the time the of the New York World's Fair, Jews could bring considerable exhibition experience to world's fairs, a subject I take up in some detail elsewhere. The key figure here is Meyer Weisgal (1894-1977), the Zionist impresario who directed the creation of the Jewish Palestine Pavilion. Weisgal made his world's fair debut in 1933 with a highly successful pageant, *The Romance of a People*, which was performed on Jewish Day at the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago.¹² With the waning of support for Zionism in the 1930s, Weisgal believed that the way to revivify the Zionist movement in the United States was not through speeches (an exhausted genre) and not through a building (too static), but through an awe-inspiring spectacle. Notably, Weisgal had already devoted himself to creating a mass spectacle in the form of a pageant at the 1933 Century of Progress Exhibition. In his memoir, published in 1971, he described the situation he faced at the time of the Century of Progress Exposition:

The Zionist field in Chicago was strewn with dry bones and a thousand speeches were not going to revive them. The leadership was confined to two or three men, and they were powerless against the inertia of the community. I realized at once that in these circumstances pedestrian Zionist propaganda and routine education, however well intentioned, would produce no effect. There had to be, first, a reawakening, and I turned to the performing arts—music, drama, spectacle.¹³

The pageant would tell the story of the ancient struggle of the Jews, using the machinery and properties of the Chicago Opera House, which had recently produced *Aida*. According to Weisgal, "The highlight of the evening was to be: *no speeches!* The spectacle would deliver its own message. This was an unheard of proposal: a great Zionist affair at which the local Zionist orators would keep their mouths shut."¹⁴

Weisgal had three goals in creating the pageant: to further the Zionist cause by gathering support and raising funds; to amplify the voice of protest against Hitler and raise money to help Jews leave Germany; and, at the same time and through these efforts, to stage a strong show of American Jewish solidarity. These goals had not changed when he was invited to lead the effort to create a Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the New York World's Fair three years later. But the strategy for how to achieve them had. The idea of building, which he had rejected for the Chicago Fair, emerged here not as an inert edifice but as a way to materialize the state—literally, in terms of all the material metonyms that were used (plants, stone, and wood, all brought from Palestine). A pavilion would make it possible to enact statehood using every protocol for doing so that the Fair could provide, even though the Fair Corporation argued that Jewish Palestine was not a state and was not to be treated as if it were, its national pavilion notwithstanding. Each rebuff produced a social drama that Weisgal quickly turned into a media event as part of his campaign to gain public recognition of the *de facto* statehood of Jewish Palestine.

Weisgal answered the question of why a building was conceived, and not a pageant, in a chapter of his autobiography appropriated titled "A Jewish State in Flushing Meadows," where he characterized the Jewish Palestine Pavilion as "showmanship of another kind."¹⁵ The major bone of contention was its location on the Flushing Meadows fairgrounds: "One section had been set aside for the national pavilions, and that is where I wanted us to be. There was of course no Jewish State as yet, but I believed in its impending arrival on the scene of history, and I wanted the idea of Jewish sovereignty to be anticipated there, in Flushing Meadows."¹⁶ The design of the Jewish Palestine Pavilion and its contents was in accord with Weisgal's desires, which was "something authentically Palestinian" to show that "in 1938 Jewish Palestine was a reality; its towns, villages, schools, hospitals and cultural institutions had risen in a land that until our coming had been derelict and waste...I wanted a miniature Palestine in Flushing Meadows."¹⁷ Insisting—with no trace of irony—that the pavilion should steer clear of politics, Weisgal applied

himself to the "construction of the Jewish State under the shadow of the Tylon and Perisphere, or, as the Jews were fond of calling it, the Lulav and Esrog."¹⁸

Not only would this be the first Jewish Palestine Pavilion at a world's fair in the United States, but also the fair would be located in New York City, home of the largest Jewish community in the United States. Not since 1853 had there been a world's fair in New York City. By the mid-1930s, when the city was selected as the site for 1939/1940 fair, Jews in New York had become an increasingly confident and successful immigrant community. Jewish businessmen and politicians, many of them from New York, were on the various boards and committees of the Fair. They formed a veritable Who's Who of national and international figures. Many of them were also active in Jewish communal affairs.¹⁹ Several of them were men of such enormous wealth that any one of them could have underwritten the cost of the Jewish Palestine Pavilion, much as Baron de Rothschild had done for the Palestine Pavilion at the 1931 International Colonial Exposition in Paris.

Palestine exhibits intended to spur trade and investment, as well as Jewish colonization, were appearing since the 1890s in Germany, England, France, and Palestine itself. Such exhibits accompanied the early Zionist Congresses, some were soon incorporated into world's fairs, while others became world's fairs in their own right. Before World War II, Jews saw the possibilities and seized the opportunity to use Palestine exhibitions to support the Yishuv, the Jewish community in Palestine, and the upbuilding of a Jewish national home. While Great Britain did organize a Palestine exhibit as part of its Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924, the real impetus to exhibit Palestine at world's fairs came from Jews who supported Jewish resettlement in Palestine and the creation of a national Jewish home.

Initially, the Fair's organizers invited Palestine to participate under the aegis of Great Britain, which could have included Palestine along with its other Empire displays or approved a Mandate sponsored display. But the last thing that Great Britain wanted was to sponsor a Palestine exhibit—in the context of the conflicts between Arabs and Jews, Britain's restrictions on Jewish land purchases and immigration, and changes in its policy on statehood. A comment to the press at the time of the Fair, by Sir William McLean, an expert on the Empire, captures the British attitude: "Palestine is a costly hobby says noted Briton in Seattle...an expensive hobby of the British Government which costs \$5,000,000 a year and 'returns nothing but trouble.'" While pointing out that these were purely his personal views, "Sir William said that England took over Palestine under a League mandate because nobody else wanted it."²⁰ The British were more concerned to present "the humanitarian and social services aspect of our Colonial Empire" and stress the "morality of the Empire."²¹

Once the British refusal was official, the way was cleared for Jews to go forward with a Palestine exhibit that was not government sponsored. That did not stop the organizers from presenting the pavilion as if it were an official presence, as can be seen from repeated objections on the part of Arabs, the State Department, the British, and the Fair Corporation to the building being called Palestine Pavilion. The organizers contemplated such names as "Land of Israel" or "Jewish National Home in Palestine," but the project quickly became known as the Palestine Pavilion, to repeated protests.²² Officially, the name was changed to Jewish Palestine Pavilion.

The real laboratory for developing concepts and techniques for "exhibiting Palestine" came with the creation of *Mischar v'Taasia* (Commerce and Trade) in 1926. This organization, based in Tel-Aviv, dedicated itself to diversifying the economy of the Yishuv, encouraging industry and trade, and supporting urban development. It realized the power of sophisticated marketing, advertising, and promotion techniques and transferred them from the economic realm

to the political one in order to "sell" the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Recognizing the importance of economic viability to statehood, their goal was to make Palestine the hub of communication and trade in the region. They organized trade fairs in Tel-Aviv and, by the 1930s, had created a permanent exhibition ground for The Levant Fair on the outskirts of Tel-Aviv, as it was now called. The Levant Fairs of the thirties became world's fairs in their own right, with international participation. *Mischar v'Taasia* took their exhibits and fairs on the road and made their most spectacular showings at two Paris world's fairs—the Palestine Pavilion at the 1931 Paris International Colonial Exposition and the Pavillon d'Israel en Palestine at the 1937 Exposition internationale des arts et techniques—and, above all, at the New York World's Fair in 1939/1940. The Levant Fair even exhibited itself, in the form of a glass model, inside the Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the New York World's Fair.

In fact, there had been many proposals for Jewish participation in the New York World's Fair. Most of them were referred to the Temple of Religion because the Fair Corporation had decided that there would be no separate denominational displays.²³ The major competition was a proposal from the Synagogue Council of America, "The Jewish Exhibits at the World's Fair, Jews of All Nations, Their Contribution to the Making of America."²⁴ Yet, in contrast with this celebratory and retrospective proposal, the Jewish Palestine Pavilion was more in keeping with the Fair's futuristic theme, "Building the World of Tomorrow." Indeed, the organizers were quick to find affinities between the Fair's rhetoric about the planned world of tomorrow and Zionist ideology.

The planners of the Jewish Palestine Pavilion realized that a way to unify national Jewish support was to stress the upbuilding of a Jewish homeland and downplay statehood. Most American Jews could agree on the former, particularly as the refugee issue became more acute, while the latter was a point of sharp disagreement. As the Fair moved into its 1940 season, however, the world was at war, and the Jewish Palestine Pavilion—including the events it sponsored—encountered less resistance to the idea of statehood.

Figure 2: Map of the New York World's Fair, 1939

In fact, Meyer Weisgal had waged a war with the Fair authorities every step of the way to ensure that the Jewish Palestine Pavilion would be treated just like every other national pavilion at the Fair—that is, the Zionist flag was to fly with the other flags, the Jewish Palestine Pavilion was to join in the Parade of Nations, it was to be included in the Book of Nations, and otherwise treated as it were government sponsored, which was tantamount to treating it as if it were a state, its anomalous legal status notwithstanding. He won on most points but not on one of the most critical—location on the map of the Fair. The Fair was organized into thematic zones, including, among others, amusement, communications, community interests, and government. It was not a perfect arrangement. Sweden and Turkey ended up in the "Food" zone, Florida in the "Amusement" zone, and Masterpieces of Art ended in the "Communication and Business Systems" zone. The Jewish Palestine Pavilion was situated in the "Community Interest" zone because, according Fair officials, it was not sponsored by a government and, for that reason, could not be included in the "Government" zone. By the time the fair closed on October 27, 1940, course, there were many national pavilions—miraculously there for a second season—that were no longer sponsored by a government, among them Czechoslovakia, which had been invaded even before the 1939 fair opened, and subsequently Poland and Finland. The presence of these pavilions was an indication, according to Grover Whalen, that "The World's Fair of 1940 now becomes international with a far more cogent meaning than when it was first planned."²⁵ Weisgal had understood this all along. The strict principle of recognizing only government sponsored

buildings as officially national ones could no longer be upheld, even nominally. This worked to the advantage of the Jewish Palestine Pavilion.

The name of Norman Bel Geddes, a brilliant American stage and industrial designer responsible for Futurama, was put forward for the design commission. Weisgal and his team rejected his candidacy on the grounds that everything about the Jewish Palestine Pavilion had to be Palestinian down to the last stone, the designer included. Their choice was Arieh El-Hanani (Arieh Sapoznikov), who had immigrated to Palestine from the Ukraine in 1922, where he studied at the Kiev School of Art and Architecture in 1917.²⁶ What might the Jewish Palestine Pavilion have looked like had Bel Geddes received the commission? Surely, nothing like the Bauhaus-inspired International Style building created by Arieh El-Hanina of the Levant Fair Studios in Tel-Aviv. His Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the New York World's Fair tied for third prize with Oscar Niemeyer's Brazilian pavilion.²⁷

Figure 3: "Planning, Designing, and Building the Exhibit," Photomontage from *Palestine Book*.

As might be expected, the Jewish Palestine Pavilion thematized Zionist ideology in its programmatic architecture, including "a tower symbolic of those that guard the water supply and lives of Jewish colonists in Palestine."²⁸ Everything about the Pavilion was intended to transport the visitor into "the atmosphere of Eretz Israel." The Cedars of Lebanon in the garden recalled the Temple of Solomon. The eucalyptus used for the main doors to the pavilion called to mind their role in drying the malaria swamps. Palestinian marble lined the walls of the Memorial Hall, which was dedicated to those who gave up their lives in the building of a Jewish national home.²⁹ Each major theme was developed in its own hall as follows:

Memorial Entrance

Section I: Achievements of Jewish Colonization

Hall of Transformation

Hall of Agriculture and Settlement

Hall of the Town Planning/Cities

Hall of Industry

Hall of Culture and Education

Hall of Labor and New Social Forms

Hall of Health

Section II: The Holy Land of Yesterday and Tomorrow

Temple of Solomon

Diorama Hall—Famous Palestinian Scenes

Section III: Gallery of Palestinian Arts and Crafts

While a detailed analysis of the installation itself is beyond the scope of this essay, suffice it to say that the archival material reveals the exhibition concepts guiding the design and exposes significant differences between the approach of El-Hanani, whose work until then had been in Palestine and Europe, and the approach of his American collaborator Lee Simonson, a distinguished theatre designer associated with the New Stagecraft. El-Hanani's approach was documentary and architectural, whereas Simonson approached installation as a form of theater, with special attention to lighting and special effects. The New York World's Fair produced an extraordinary body of reflection on the nature of exhibition, particularly at international expositions, but also in relation to museums.³⁰ Those reflections, together with discussions in the archive of the Jewish Palestine Pavilion, allow us to historicize display concepts, practices, and understandings. What emerges from this material is the historical entanglement of propaganda, as understood in this period, and advertising as related arts of persuasion.

The Jewish Palestine Pavilion was not the only context for Jewish participation at the New York World's Fairs. As already mentioned there was the Temple of Religion. In 1940, with the withdrawal of the Soviets and the dismantling of their building, the gaping space on the Fair map was filled with a hastily constructed American

Common and Immigrant Honor Wall, where Jews could be found, not as such—only under the countries where they had been born or spent their formative years. They could also be found in the Polish Pavilion, where Arthur Szyk's miniatures were the basis for an exhibition of the role of Poles in American history. And Jews were part of the failed effort to create a Freedom Pavilion—an inversion of the Nazi Degenerate Art Exhibit—which would feature the work of the writers and artists that had been exiled, or self-exiled from Germany. But, nothing was as prominent or as national in its reach as the Jewish Palestine Pavilion.

The Jewish Palestine Pavilion, by dint of the massive organization effort to mobilize American Jewry to support it, is part of a process of transformation that David H. Shpiro describes in his study of American Zionism. He delineates the conversion of American Zionism from "an apolitical, philanthropical entity into a powerful, well-organized political influence group that had adopted many of the methods inherent in the American democratic process and had learned to manipulate the diverse forces at play on the American scene."³¹ Making no mention of phenomena like the Jewish Palestine Pavilion, Shapiro observes that "The Zionist movement totally lacked organizational tools; it had no department of information and propaganda, no public relations section, no regular means of feeding news to the press or radio."³²

However, by searching for the strategic approach that only an established organization could sustain, he overlooks the kind of tactical approach that someone like Weisgal would seize as opportunities arose.³³ Indeed, the Jewish Palestine Pavilion is a prime example of tactics, from beginning to end. Once the Pavilion was up and running, Weisgal made every effort to convert tactics into strategy. That is, he pressured the Fair Corporation to recognize the Pavilion as a national entity on a par with the other national pavilions so that he would not have to proceed tactically, opportunity by opportunity, to fight for this recognition. Even with limited resources, the Jewish Palestine Pavilion organized a systematic campaign, involving information services, public relations, publicity, and propaganda on behalf of the Zionist cause.³⁴

The tactic, in Palestine and at the Fair, was to make facts on the ground (or grounds). The Jewish Palestine Pavilion played a vital role in projecting statehood as "fact." As I have argued here, this was done not only through displays of Jewish Palestine as if it were already a functioning state, a *fait accompli* awaiting ratification, but also by using the world's fair itself as a stage for performing statehood—that is, as a series of occasions for international recognition. For

the Jewish Palestine Pavilion to convey *de facto* statehood, it had first to envision, then visualize, and finally project the "fact." As discussed above, a pavilion was better suited for the purpose than the kind of pageant Weisgal had produced for the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago. A pavilion was more "strategic" than a pageant because it occupied a nationally defined territory on the fair grounds from which it could project its messages in a sustained and systematic way for the entire duration of the Fair.

This raises a final question: why, until recently, did the Palestinian Arabs not create their own national exhibits at world's fairs?³⁵ The vital importance of projection is captured by Edward Said in his analysis of what he characterizes as Palestinian powerlessness to claim Jerusalem:

It is a sign of Palestinian powerlessness and, it must be said, collective incompetence that to this day the story of Jerusalem's loss both in 1948 and 1967 has not been told by them, but—insofar as it has been told at all—partially reconstructed either by Israelis sympathetic and unsympathetic or by foreigners. In other words, not only has there been no Palestinian narrative of 1948 and after that can at least challenge the dominant Israeli narrative, there has also been no collective Palestinian projection for Jerusalem since its all-too-definitive loss in 1948 and again in 1967. The effect of this quite extraordinary historical and political neglect has been to deprive us of Jerusalem well *before* the fact.³⁶

The Jewish Palestine Pavilion was precisely about projecting statehood before the *de jure* fact. Said attributes considerable agency to such projections. Referring to Israel's projection of Jerusalem as "an 'eternally' unified, principally Jewish city under exclusive Israeli sovereignty," Said cautions, "Only by doing so first in projections could it then proceed to the changes on the ground during the last eight or nine years [prior to 1995], that is, to undertake the massive architectural, demographic, and political metamorphosis that would then correspond to the images and projections."³⁷ Would that it were that simple.

There is, however, cause for cautious optimism, given a recent efforts to offer "a tangible vision of the benefits of peace." *The Arc*, a proposal developed under the auspices of the Rand Corporation, is intended as "an urban and infrastructural solution that would embody the iconic power that would dramatize the emergence of a new independent state."³⁸ The issue is not whether or not *The Arc* is the ultimate solution, but rather that the process of envisioning statehood in concrete as well as symbolically resonant terms. Much is to be learned in this regard from the Jewish Palestine Pavilion.

¹ Jews could indeed be found elsewhere within world's fairs. Even when the grounds for their inclusion was religion, they defined themselves in broader cultural and historical terms. On the history of Jewish participation in world's fairs, see Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Exhibiting Jews," in *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 79-128. On Holy Land displays at world's fairs, see Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "A place in the world: Jews and the Holy Land at World's Fairs," in *Encounters With the "Holy Land": Place, Past and Future in American Jewish Culture*, eds. Jeffrey Shandler and Beth S. Wenger, (Philadelphia: National Museum of American Jewish History; the Center for Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania; and the University of Pennsylvania Library, 1997) pp. 60-82.

² J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed., eds. Marina Sbisa and J.O. Urmsson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).

³ Grover Aloysius Whalen, *Mr. New York: The Autobiography of Grover A. Whalen* (New York: Putnam, 1955), p. 211.

⁴ Whalen, *Mr. New York*, p. 176.

⁵ Whalen, *Mr. New York*, p. 176.

⁶ As Frank Monaghan's *Official Guide to the Fair*, 3rd ed. (New York: Exposition Publications Inc., 1939), p. 24, states: "The true poets of the twentieth century are the designers, the architects, and the engineers who glimpse some inner vision, create some beautiful figment of the imagination and then translate it into valid actuality for the world to enjoy. Such is the poetic process; the poet translates his inspiration into terms that convey vivid sensation to his fellow men. But instead of some compelling pattern of words you have a great articulation that is far more tangible and immediate; exhibits that embody imaginative ideas, buildings, murals, sculptures and landscapes. Tribute to the men who designed the Fair, but tribute, too, to the many men, celebrated and obscure, who actually built it! The designer's dream on paper and charts is only a tentative gesture toward reality, for the engineer and the works are the indispensable middlemen who translate a dream into a fact."^{6a} Note the terms imagination to imagination/actuality, sensation, tangible, immediate, embody, dream/reality, dream/fact.

⁷ Monaghan, *Official Guide to the Fair*, p. 215.

⁸ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), p. 83.

⁹ Cited by Daniel Shimshoni, *Israeli Democracy: The Middle of the Journey* (New York, London: Free Press and Collier Macmillan, 1982).

¹⁰ Quotes are respectively from Roland Robertson, "Social Theory, Cultural Relativity and the Problem of Globality," in *Culture, Globalization, and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, ed. Anthony D. King (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 78; and Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, p. 83. On the notion of mutual recognition, see Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990). Consider, for example, that the Soviet Union was the first government to sign up for the 1939 New York World's Fair in March 1937. The United States had only just recognized the Soviet Union in 1933. (Swift, "The Soviet World of Tomorrow," p. 365).

¹¹ Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, p. 83.

¹² This pageant traveled to New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Cleveland. It had been preceded by his Hanukkah pageant in 1932 in Chicago, and was followed by *The Eternal Road* in 1937, a grandiose biblical epic that lost money. Weisgal's repeated proposals for a pageant at the New York World's Fair, preserved in the records of the Fair at New York Public Library, were never accepted. On the pageants that Weisgal did produce, see Atay Citron, "Pageantry and Theatre in the Service of Jewish Nationalism in the United States 1933-1946" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1989); Stephen J. Whitfield, "The Politics of Pageantry, 1936-1946," *American Jewish History* 84, 3 (1996):221-251; Arthur Goren, "Celebrating Zion in America," in *Encounters with the "Holy Land": Place, Past and Future in American Jewish Culture* (Center for Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania; and the University of Pennsylvania Library, 1997), pp. 41-59; and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Exhibiting Jews."

13. Meyer Weisgal, *...So Far: An Autobiography* (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 106-107.

14. Weisgal, *...So Far*, p. 107.

15. Weisgal, *...So Far*, p. 142.

16. Weisgal, *...So Far*, p. 149.

17. Weisgal, *...So Far*, p. 150.

18. Weisgal, *...So Far*, pp.158, 161.

¹⁹ Charter Members of the New York World's Fair 1939, Inc. included the following luminaries. Unless otherwise indicated, they were American-born. Harry F. Guggenheim was an aviation pioneer and founder of *Newsday*. Arthur Lehman, an investment banker and art collector, played a leading role in the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York and the Joint Distribution Committee. His brother Herbert was governor of New York State during the 1930s. Henry Morgenthau, Sr., was a real estate lawyer and agent, philanthropist, and diplomat. Morgenthau came to the United States from Germany in 1866. He served as ambassador to Turkey between 1913 and 1916, during which time he raised money to help Jewish settlers in Palestine. President Wilson sent him to Poland in 1919 to investigate atrocities committed against Jews. A Reform Jew, he helped found and then served as president of the Free Synagogue. His son Henry Morgenthau, Jr., was Secretary of the Treasury under Roosevelt. David Sarnoff, who arrived in the United States from Russia in 1900, played an instrumental role in the development of radio and then television as mass media. He became president of RCA in 1930. RCA was represented at the New York World's Fair by its own spectacular building, from where, in April 1939, Sarnoff "conducted the first public television broadcast." Percy S. Straus was president of Macy's at the time of the Fair and Felix M. Warburg, who was born in Germany, was an investment banker, philanthropist, lover of art, and leader in the Jewish

community. He helped establish the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies in New York, the Jewish Agency, and the Palestine Emergency Fund. He was an active force in providing relief and to Jewish communities in Europe and Palestine during and after the two World Wars. He supported Jewish settlement in Palestine, but not a Jewish state. Robert D. Kohn, the architect for Temple Emanu-El (built in 1929), chaired the Theme Committee and served on the Board of Design. Albert Einstein chaired the Local Advisory Committee on Science.

²⁰ Cull, "Overture to an Alliance," p. 345. Quoted in *Seattle Sunday Times*, 6 August 1939.

²¹ Cull, "Overture to an Alliance," p. 344. Without a state and an army, the only authority that the Jewish Palestine Pavilion could put forward was moral authority. Precisely how the exhibitors did this will be taken up elsewhere.

²² The agreement was signed on April 14, 1938.[c] The American Consul General at Jerusalem alerted the Department of State in Washington that "the strongly nationalistic 'Arab Women's Committee'" had sent a letter to the High Commissioner on August 13, 1938 "protesting against the use of the term 'Palestine' to describe the pavilion in question, i.e. 'one purely Jewish in character'. Such a use, it said, 'would be a gross abuse of the word 'Palestine', a violation of the international status of the country and calculated to excite the feelings of the Arabs.'" (Letter from Frederick B. Lyon to Julius C. Holmes, September 16, 1938, Palestine, Government Participation, Box 535, NYWF, New York Public Library).

²³ The most ambitious study of the Temple of Religion is Jesse T. Todd, "Imagining the Future of American Religion at the New York World's Fair, 1939-40" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1996).

²⁴ Their approach was consistent with a long history of immigrant homelands exhibitions. It was in the spirit of the American Commons and the ideological approach to American "identity" discussed by Gleason above. They also floated the idea of recreating the Newport Synagogue on the fairgrounds.

²⁵ "Denmark to Keep Its Exhibit at Fair," *New York Times*, 10 April 1940, p. 26.

²⁶ Rubin and Levin, *Arieh El-Hanani* (Amsterdam: Rubin Museum, 1993).[c]

²⁷ Rubin and Levin, *Arieh El-Hanani*. [c]

²⁸ Meyer [Weisgal. ...*Facts About the Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the N. Y. World's Fair-1939* ([New York]: [Palestine Exhibits, Inc.], [1939]), p. 6. On the significance of this architectural icon, see Tamar Katriel, and Eliza Shenhar, "Tower and Stockade: Dialogic Narration in Israeli Settlement Ethos," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 76 (1990):359-380.

²⁹ ...*Facts About the Jewish Palestine Pavilion*, p. 6.

³⁰ See, for example, Carlos E. Cummings, *East is East and West is West: Some Observations on the World's Fairs of 1939 by One whose Main Interest Is Museums*, Bulletin of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences, volume 20 ([East Aurora, N.Y.: Printed by the Roycrofters, 1940).

³¹ David H. Shapiro, *From Philanthropy to Activism: the Political Transformation of American Zionism in the Holocaust Years, 1933-1945* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1994), p. xi.

³² Shapiro, *From Philanthropy to Activism*, p. 19.

³³ On the difference between strategy and tactic, see Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

³⁴ Only recently has attention turned to such tactical phenomena. Arthur Goren has led the way with his work on Jewish public culture in the United States. See his essay, "Celebrating Zion in America," in *Encounters With the "Holy Land": Place, Past and Future in American Jewish Culture*, eds. Jeffrey Shandler and Beth S. Wenger (Philadelphia: National Museum of American Jewish History; the Center for Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania; and the University of Pennsylvania Library, 1997), pp. 41-59; and Arthur A. Goren, *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). James L. Gelvin (Zionism and the representation of 'Jewish Palestine' at the New York World's Fair, 1939-1940) analyzes the Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the New York World's Fair as a window on a critical moment in the history of American Zionism.

³⁵ Any effort to answer this question cannot be separated from the process of their disenfranchisement. See Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1998* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999) and Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

³⁶ Edward Said, "Projecting Jerusalem," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25, 1 (1995):5-14. The quotation appears on p. 8.

³⁷ Said, "Projecting Jerusalem," p. 7. This passage has been quoted by critics of the ineffectuality of Arab and Arab-American reactions to Israel's claims to Jerusalem in its recent Epcot pavilion. See, for example, [Editor], "Framing Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Quarterly File* 6 (1999), at <http://www.jqf-jerusalem.org/journal/1999/jqf6/journal.html#note1> (date of last access: March 26, 2004). As with the 1939 New York World's Fair, Israel projects and the Arabs react. Thus, Khaled Turaani, executive director of American Muslims for Jerusalem, stated, "if the Arab League can not stand up to Mickey Mouse, how can they stand up to Israel's attempts to annex Jerusalem?" He called on "Saudi Arabia and Morocco to use their exhibits to right the wrongs committed by the Israeli exhibit." Quoted by Rasha Saad, "Dealing With Disney," *Al-Ahram Weekly Online* (Cairo), 449 (September 30-October 6, 1999). See <http://www.ahram.org.eg/weekly/1999/449/re3.htm>. The Expo 2000 in Hanover, which included Palestinian and Israeli exhibits, would be worthy of study in this context. The Palestinian exhibit was enclosed within the walls of Jerusalem. The Israeli exhibit, hastily assembled, was entitled "Isr@el from Holy Land to Whole-E-Land" and featured computer terminals. The website is still "under construction." See <http://www.isralexpo.net/> (date of last access: February 11, 2004).

³⁸ Doug Suisman, Steven N. Simon, Glenn E. Robinson, C. Ross Anthony, and Michael Schoenbaum, *The Arc: A Formal Structure for a Palestinian State* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2005), pp. 5.