

THE SEVENTH DAY

HALF A GENERATION LATER

QUESTIONS

Danny Epstein

Why was The Seventh Day written/published?

(Or more precisely - Why was it edited/redacted as it is?

If it was edited today would it be different?

Is this a personal work with political overtones,
or a political work with personal overtones?

What would constitute a good introduction?

Hatikvah? Shir HaPalmach? Shir HaPartizanim? Shir LeShalom?

Is The Seventh Day a response to catastrophe?

Is war, as such, a catastrophe? Or must you lose?

Was the Six Day War just another battle in The Jewish War for
survival?

Is Israel a continuity of Jewish History?

Or is it a break, a terminal?

Does Zionism rewrite Jewish History?

Is the Holocaust, and the entire Diaspora Period, simply a
shameful, impotent period to overcome?

Can we break the cycles of History?

Now that the tables are turned, how do we respond?

Has becoming victors/conquerors/occupiers corrupted us?

Do we relate to Arabs as potential enemies? potential friends?

Can there be peace with the Arabs/Palestinians?

How do we educate?

Should we teach values that are ethical (universal)?
that are national (particular)?

Must they be in conflict?

How do we respond to fear? hate? death? being conquered? being
the conquerer?

Is the Arab-Israeli struggle a new twist in the chain of Jewish
catastrophe?

The Seventh Day

Tamar: ...I remember that all of us, that is all the mothers, were in the children's house. It was a week or two after we had our babies. Some of the girls said they were sorry they'd had a child. I was thinking all the time, "I'm glad I've got a daughter." It was in my mind right through the war. I also said, "I'm glad she doesn't know what's going on, that she won't remember it all." At the time I think I was trying to convince myself that there'd never be another war. But somehow I felt all the time that this wasn't the last, that history repeats itself and ... really, perhaps we need lots and lots of children - we've just got to go on having children.

Yiftah: So there'll be lots of soldiers?

Tamar: So that if one person dies... How can you bring up kids and show them flowers and all sorts of beautiful things when you know that perhaps in ten years these same kids - or even their fathers - because even they won't be so old... Some people have already fought four wars. How can you bring up people that way?...

Amitai: I have no feeling for the Diaspora. Or to be exact, my feeling is antagonistic. On the other hand, I am drawn much more to the heroes of Israel, like Judah the Maccabee. I had no desire to read about the heroes of the Diaspora and the ghetto revolts. In my reading about the Diaspora, I looked for the bad things.

Menachem: ...People who have gone through a number of wars feel a profound fatalism. How much longer will we have to fight? At any rate, I've been in four wars, I've gone from war to war. People flee, destroy, everything. How long will this go on for? It's also connected with the massacre of the Jews by Hitler, this feeling of the tragedy of Jewish existence. It isn't anything conscious. But it's there.

Yoske: There is a Jewish destiny, and it is definitely something specifically Jewish. Even if he denies his faith, a Jew nevertheless has a rendezvous with his Jewish destiny. Even if you flee from that destiny, it pursues you.....

....I have seen cities on mobilization day. I have seen nations go to war. I have seen them marching off to the blare of raucous loudspeakers. I have seen them in the railway stations clasped in the arms of their weeping wives, their despairing mothers. I have watched them pass through the cheering crowds, receiving the embraces of foolish women. I have watched them go off, their bayonets wreathed in gay flowers, their hob-nailed boots crashing out the rhythm of the marching songs that swell from their throats. I have seen them smiling and proud. Always surrounded by crowds waving them on with shouts of "Hurrah!" "Viva!" "Hoch hoch!" "Nych Dzhiah!" But never before have I seen a city rise so silently to answer the call of duty. This nation went to war filled with a sense of destiny, gravely and quietly prepared, in a way that cannot be surpassed. They went from Natanya and Kiryat Shmonah, from Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Beersheva. This, then, is my people. A people I did not know before.

Abba Kovner