Israel is a modern state whose institutions were clearly shaped by an ideological movement. The declaration of independence in 1948 was an immediate expression of the fundamental Zionist idea: it gave effect to a plan advocated by organized Zionists since the 1880s for solving the Jewish Problem. Thus, major Israeli political institutions, such as the party structure, embody principles and practices that were followed in the World Zionist Organization.

In this respect, Israel is similar to other new states whose political institutions directly derive from the nationalist movements that won their independence. History and social structure are inseparably joined; the contemporary social problems of the new state are clearly rooted in its history, while the shape of its future is being decided by the very policies through which it is trying to solve these problems. At the same time, there are many unique aspects to the birth of Israel. The problem to be solved by acquiring sovereignty in Israel (and establishing a free Jewish society there) was the problem of a people living in exile. The first stage, therefore, was to return to the people a homeland to which they were intimately attached, not only in their dreams but in the minute details of their ways of life.

This important book studies the birth of the State of Israel and analyzes the elaborately articulated and variegated ideological principles of the Zionist movement that led to that birth. It examines conflicting pre-state ideals and the social structure that emerged in Palestine's Jewish community during the Mandate period. In particular, *Zionism and the Creation of a New Society* reflects upon Israel's existence as both a state and a social structure - a place conceived before its birth as a means of solving a particular social malady: the modern Jewish Problem. Jehuda Reinharz and the late Ben Halpern carefully trace the development of the Zionist idea from its earliest expressions up to the eve of World War II, setting their study against a broad background of political and social development throughout Europe and the Middle East.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Jehuda Reinharz** is Richard Koret Professor of Modern Jewish History and President of Brandeis University. He is the author, editor, or coeditor of numerous volumes, including *Essential Papers on Zionism* (1996), *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman* (OUP, 1993), *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Zionist Leader* (OUP, 1985), and *Israel in the Middle East* (OUP, 1984). Dr. Reinharz is also General Editor of the "Studies in Jewish History" series published by Oxford University Press.

This is a seminal work on the history of Zionism and the emergence of the State of Israel. It uniquely combines the history of ideas with social and political analyses. The authors bring unusual insight to the circumstances and concepts that made the Jewish state a possibility. Lucid, learned, and thoughtfully written, the book is a must for every student of Zionism and Israeli society. - Shlomo Avineri, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The authors have provided an extraordinarily wide and rich historical analysis of Zionism from its inception to the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Their control of both source material and secondary work is exhaustive and exact, and their interpretation of specific events always judicious and informed. One need not agree with them on all issues - as I do not - to recognize that this is a truly outstanding work. - Steven T. Katz, Director of the Center for Judaic Studies at Boston University

This is an excellent history of Zionist ideas and politics, mainly in Palestine, and of the early 'heroic' period leading to the establishment of the State of Israel. It was written by two leading students of the subject with admirable clarity and conciseness. - Walter Laqueur, Institute for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC

This is a book about the power of faith, rather than faith in power. It reveals how the impossible became possible - and how a dream gave birth to a state. It is written in a real attempt to uphold intellectual integrity and adhere to factual chronology. - Shimon Peres, former Prime Minister of Israel

This book reflects the combined work of two eminent historians, the late Ben Halpern and Jehuda Reinharz. A cross between historical and sociological approaches, this book manages admirably to present a dynamic picture of the Jewish society in Palestine and the Zionist movement in its most creative period - on the verge of statehood. Change and stability, revolution and tradition, ideologies and institutions: all are depicted here in their immense diversity as competing factors in Jewish life. This book is long overdue; I can hardly think of another book in the English language that so successfully presents the full spectrum of Zionist society in pre-state times. Combining a critical approach with a sympathetic view of Israel and Zionism, it avoids the pitfalls of eulogizing or excessive criticism, finding the right balance between the two. Any scholar or student of Israel, history would be wise to make use of this book. - Anita Shapira, Tel Aviv University

Zionism and the Creation of a New Society is the history of the development of the Jewish State from the early idea of Jewish nationalism. Ranging from the Zionist movements in the late nineteenth century to the establishment of Israel in 1948, this study clearly demonstrates the continuity between the principles and practices of those early movements and the social and political structure of Israel today.

Jehuda Reinharz and the late Ben Halpern, the two foremost students of Zionism in the United States, have produced the most comprehensive and incisive history of Zionism in the English language.