When I first began thinking about what form this book would take, I took a trip to the synagogue in Los Angeles where I attended Hebrew school three days a week beginning in the late 1970s. I wanted to see if there was an archive that would reveal to me how I learned to be a Zionist. My only recollection of knowledge acquired during this time centered on the Nazi holocaust, Israel, and Jewish holidays that reinforced a Zionist ideology. The principal informed me that during my years of attendance there was at least one Zionist teacher whose instruction sacrificed the basics of Hebrew and the Bible. As would become clear to me once I examined curricular materials from that time, there would have been ample resources at his disposal.

The principal allowed me to look through a storage room in disarray that contained textbooks and curricular materials. I found one of the main textbooks I studied during my tenure at the school, Helen Fine’s *Behold, the Land: A Social Studies Text on the State of Israel* published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), which in 2003 became the Union for Reform Judaism. I also found a pile of magazines called *Keeping Posted*, also produced by the UAHC. These magazines were organized thematically and were dated between 1972 and 1984. Their subject fell under various categories, the bulk of which included: Law, Ethics, and Issues; the Holocaust; Israel and Zionism; Jews of Foreign Lands, Past and Present; and Traditional Texts and Holidays. They included Teachers’ Editions with a lesson plan. The magazine itself was designed as handouts for students, although I do not recall ever seeing them. Some of the most striking titles I found were as follows: “Zionism: What It Is and Is Not” (1976); “Jews of Arab Lands” (1977); “Fighters of Israel” (1978); “Anti-Semitism in America” (1979); “Theodor Herzl and the Zionist Dream” (1982); “The Palestinians” (1983). These titles roughly correspond to the themes I recall studying in my Hebrew school classes, with the exception of the Palestinians.
Jewish education has not always been like this in the United States. Zionism is relatively new to Hebrew school programs. Its explicit inclusion into curricular materials was principally a post-1967 development. It was only after the June War that Jewish American education began to shift by mainstreaming a Zionist perspective. This chapter traces these transformations focusing on the way the curricula represent Israel. I do not claim to be representative or exhaustive. Instead, I look at trends in curricular materials and at studies conducted that show the gradual shift in Jewish American Hebrew school textbooks between the June War and the 1993 Oslo Accords. Although studying these texts cannot tell me how they have been used by teachers, it can still give a general idea of what sentiments and ideas were prioritized. My interest here is in examining the discourse and representations in these materials with a specific aim of considering how those may have affected the U.S. media and ultimately the Israel lobby in ways that contribute to the unquestioning support of Israel and the silencing of Palestinian narratives.

**Americanizing Zionism**

In 1967, Israel was so worried about its relationship with American Jews that it sent a special envoy to the United States to study their attitudes about Israel. In this report, Tom Segev explains, “Many of them looked down on Israel for not being able to survive without their money.” It was not only this sign of helplessness that he observes, but also stronger sentiments coming from younger Jews visiting Israel that same year, who described Israelis as exhibiting “a lack of respect for the individual, ethnic discrimination, chauvinism and hypocrisy, narrow-mindedness.”

These opinions are characteristic of pre–June War point of view. Paul Breines details the impact that war had on Jewish American thinking:

It is really only after the June 1967 war that we see the proliferation of scholarly studies, films, courses, lectures, conferences, tough Jewish pulp fiction, and intense popular discussion. Among American Jews, Israel’s victory in June 1967 expanded and escalated what had previously been a limited relationship to the Holocaust industry (a *shoah* show, some have called it) that desecrates the memory of the murdered by sale, resale, and overuse of their terror and death. In any case, from June 1967 to the present, Jewish Americans have increasingly thought of themselves in relation to both Israel and the Holocaust, that is, in terms of the imagery of tough and gentle/weak Jews.