Uri’s novel *The Haj* attempts to justify the Jewish claim to a homeland in Palestine and demonstrate the open-mindedness of the Jewish nation towards the lawful denizens of Palestine. However, Uris’s patent partiality for the Jewish race breaks through now and then to confound the reader. The ultimate authorial objective seems to be to justify the ways of the Jewish race to the world.

Leon Uris’s *The Haj* is not entirely a Jewish novel. It is not entirely an Arab novel either. It may be viewed as a novel on the Arab people written from a Jewish point of view or as a novel on the establishment of the modern State of Israel from the Arab perspective of view. Till recently most readers tended to view it as a novel based on questionable assumptions and teeming with sweeping generalizations emanating from a patently Jewish perspective. However, the recent waves of protests and uprisings in the Arab world tend to persuade readers to think that at least some of Uris’s assumptions and quite a number of his generalizations have proved insightful, if not prophetic. In any case the history of the Jews, particularly of the founding of modern Israel, cannot be written or read excluding the Arab people. So it is pertinent to take a close look at *The Haj* in the present study.

In a note prefixed to the novel, Uris confesses: “Many of the events in *The Haj* are a matter of history and public record. Many of the scenes were created around historical incidents and used as a backdrop for the purpose of fiction” (n.p.). Uris also admits the presence in the narrative of “recognizable public figures who were
associated historically with this period, such as David Ben-Gurion, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Abdullah, Yigal Allon, and others” (n.p.).

In the “Prelude” to the novel, dated 1922, Uris describes the ancient rite of the passage of power in Arab society. Young Ibrahim, in his mid-twenties, stands beside the bed of his father, who is in his last moments. Suddenly, the dying Muktar of Tabah hands Ibrahim his jewelled dagger. Ibrahim protests that it belongs to his older brother Farouk. But the old Muktar dismisses Farouk as a toothless dog and exhorts Ibrahim to take over the leadership and ensure that the power remains with them, the Soukoris. As the village wails for the dead sheik, the other four clans select a new Muktar for Tabah, breaking the Soukori hold of a century. Ibrahim, however, convenes a meeting of the leaders of the clans and, displaying his father’s jewelled dagger, reasserts the supremacy of the Soukori clan (Uris, *The Haj* 1).

When the narrator, eight-year-old Ishmael, is taunted over his father Ibrahim al Soukori’s plan to wed a new wife, he runs to his father and protests, only to be shown how fruitless it is in his world to protest:

My father grabbed me by the arm and shook me so violently that I thought I would faint. Then he tossed me like garbage, so that I landed in the open sewer that ran down from the top of the village.

There I was, dressed as a girl, shrieking at the top of my lungs. I could feel salt from my tears and snout from my nose dripping into my mouth. I shrieked in desperation, for even at that age I realized there was nothing I could do about my situation. There was no way to either rebel or protest.
I have seen that little boy over and over again in refugee camps playing in garbage dumps, being hit and shaken and taunted by adults and family and playmates. All screaming to an unhearing Allah. (Uris, *The Haj* 6)

This insight into the consciousness of the Arab child seems to point to the Arab-Jewish world of Uris’s fiction and to explain why it ticks as it does.

Ishmael says that, before he was nine, he had learnt the “basic canon of Arab life,” which he spells out thus: “It was me against my brother; me and my brother against our father; my family against my cousins and the clan; the clan against the tribe, and the tribe against the world. And all of us against the infidel” (Uris, *The Haj* 14). This is a clear instance of Uris’ sweeping generalization about the Arab way of life. Moreover, part of the highly rhetorical pronouncement is certainly beyond the consciousness of the nine-year-old narrator. However, after what has recently overtaken some Arab countries, particularly Libya, the reader must wonder if it is, after all, not true.

Uris explains how Bedouin culture evolved:

A system of absolute social order emerged, so that each man had a specific place in the tribe into which he was locked from birth to death. The only way to rise was to destroy the man above and dominate the men below. The demands of survival left no room for convocations of Bedouin to debate democratic principles, for the law of the desert was absolute. (*The Haj* 17)

The ongoing unrest in the Arab world bears out the above explication.
Jewish pioneers arrive at a spot across the road and opposite Tabah to establish a kibbutz named Shemesh. There are twenty men and six women. They are accompanied by a dozen men of the Shomer, the Jewish watchmen. The Muktar and the people of Tabah witness their arrival. The Muktar calls for a meeting of the elders. They are interrupted by a Jew on a horse. The Jew introduces himself as Gideon Asch and says that the Jews have purchased several thousand dunams of land across the road to build a farm. He asks for friendship and permission to draw water from their well. Ibrahim says that they will not get a single drop. Gideon leads his horse to the Arab well, let’s it drink and dunks his own face and mounts his horse. Ibrahim threatens the worst if Gideon enters Tabah again. Gideon simply laughs, salutes mockingly and rides away (Uris, The Haj 18-20).

Throughout the day there is feverish preparation, expectation and discussion in Tabah, joined in by Arabs from neighbouring villages. Finally, the war council accepts Ibrahim’s plan for a frontal assault in three waves. Everything goes wrong when the plan is executed. When the first wave is fifty feet from the barbed wire, the Jews switch on deafening sirens and fill the skies with flares. The Arabs freeze. The Jews pour out a couple of volleys of gunfire, but into the air. The Arabs retreat, telling stories of a Haganah force and British soldiers in the settlement and even of the use of poison gas. In the morning, Ibrahim, as Muktar, congratulates them on their “complete victory” (Uris, The Haj 30-34).

Uris tells the sordid tale of the Arabs’ neglect of the land and the contrasting diligence with which the Jewish settlers reclaimed swamps and barren, eroded hillsides, how the kibbutzim were viewed with jealousy and hatred by their Arab
neighbours, how the Jewish hunger for land to till stoked the greed of absentee Arab landlords and induced them to sell parcel after parcel of land after evicting their tenants ruthlessly (The Haj, Part One, ch.6). This is a well-known matter of recorded history.

An Arab youth from Tabah attempts to rape a pregnant woman of Shemesh and flees to hide among the Wahhabis in the desert. The Jews retaliate by closing the valve that sends water into Tabah. Ibrahim storms into Shemesh. Gideon calmly informs him that, when Effendi Kabir sold the land to the Jews, he sold the water rights too. Ibrahim feels betrayed. Gideon promises uninterrupted water supply to Tabah as long as Tabah keeps the peace. Ibrahim agrees to keep the peace (Uris, The Haj 45-50). However, when Gideon offers some good advice on agricultural and allied operations, Ibrahim betrays what makes the Palestinian Arab a failure. He wants nothing more than their share of the water. He asserts that Canaan will always be dust and will never become a land of milk and honey, because that is how the prophet has willed it. Gideon proposes that they meet regularly—once at Ibrahim’s knoll and once by the stream flowing through the Jewish settlement (Uris, The Haj 50-51). The conversation above explains the endless Arab-Israeli conflict. The current uprisings in the Middle East also stand explicated.

The Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al Husseini, incites the Arabs by going up into the pulpit and spreading false tales of impending capture of the Al Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem. The enraged Moslems go on a binge in Jerusalem and murder docile Hassidim. The violence spreads to many other towns also. But the Ayalon valley remains relatively calm during the 1929 riots, largely due to the Muktar of Tabah,
who orders his people not to get involved in the Mufti’s “holy war.” To Gideon, Ibrahim says that they had no choice since the Jews control the valve on their water. He says that the Jews are fools and do not know how to deal with the Arabs and that the Jews should learn to think like Arabs. Gideon asks how, having begged for and been denied mercy in a hundred lands, the Jews can deny mercy to others (Uris, *The Haj* 51-55). Ibrahim replies:

> “Because this is not a land of mercy. Magnanimity has no part in our world. Sooner or later you will have to play politics, make alliances, secret agreements, arm one tribe against another. You will start thinking more and more like us. Jewish ideals will not work here. You Jews have come in and destroyed a system of order we created out of the desert. Perhaps the bazaar looks disorganized to you, but it works for us. Perhaps Islam looks fanatical to you, but it provides us with the means to survive the harshness of this life and prepare us for a better life hereafter.” (Uris, *The Haj* 55)

Gideon protests:

> “It need not be that life under Islam is meaningless on this earth and that you are only here for the purpose of waiting to die. Could it be, Haj Ibrahim, you use Islam as an excuse for your failures, an excuse to quietly accept tyranny, an excuse for not using sweat and ingenuity to make something out of this land.” (Uris, *The Haj* 55-56).

Ibrahim protests:
“It has always been trouble when outsiders come here and tell us how to live. First the Crusaders, then the Turks, then the British, then the French.... everyone telling us our ways are no good and we must change.”

“You’re wrong about one thing. The Jews belong here. We come from the same father. We are both sons of Abraham. There must be a place in our father’s house for us. One small room is all we ask.”

(Uris, *The Haj* 56)

The machinations of the Mufti of Jerusalem, inciting the Arab population against the Jews are part of history. So is his formation of the Arab Higher Committee, with himself as its head, and the recruitment of Kaukji’s Irregulars, his extorting money from wealthy Arab families and murdering those who resist (Uris, *The Haj* 64-67).

As the Arab attacks and raids become more brazen, the British seek help and cooperation from the Haganah, though they refuse to loosen their watch against Jewish immigration. This changes the status of the Haganah from semi-legal to legal (Uris, *The Haj* 66). As part of the British-Haganah cooperation, the maverick British Army officer, Orde Wingate, is introduced to Gideon. They decide to raise squads of Jewish raiders. According to Wingate, these squads should use the terrain of Palestine as ancient biblical warriors did and take the night away from the Arabs (Uris, *The Haj* 70). Wingate explains his theory thus:

The Jews, we Zionists ... will never be able settle more than a few million people here. That is reality. What is also reality is the fact that
such a state will always be surrounded by tens of millions of hostile and unforgiving Arabs. You cannot expect to hold them at bay forever. Sheer hatred makes that impossible. If you are to survive, you must establish the principle of retaliation. For example, I am going to need several squads of these night fighters to guard the Iraqi oil pipe line into Haifa. It covers hundreds of miles and obviously a few dozen men can’t protect it from sabotage. What the Arab must understand before he cuts the pipe is that he is going to face a reprisal... massive retaliation—it is the key to controlling forces a hundred times the size of your own.” (Uris, *The Haj* 70)

To this day Israeli security policy is based on this very theory.

Kaukji plans to attack Tabah at night. Gideon and Orde Wingate plan to use the specially trained Special Night Squad to thwart the attack. Orde Wingate visits Tabah, meets Haj Ibrahim, and plants in his head the idea of burning the fields to defeat Kaukji’s Irregulars. Later Orde Wingate moves his Special Night Squad to a strategic location at the mouth of the Bab el Wad and hides them. They sit tight as more than 250 of Kaukji’s Irregulars move towards Tabah. Meanwhile, Haj Ibrahim, heeding Orde Wingate’s advice, pours all the kerosene available in his village down the slope offering the only entry point into Tabah. At two in the morning, the Irregulars launch their attack on Tabah. Haj Ibrahim throws a burning torch into the kerosene soaked field below. His people do likewise, and soon the slope is ablaze. Within minutes many of the Irregulars are either dead or charred badly. The
remainder limp back toward the village of Fakim only to be slaughtered almost to a man by the waiting Special Night Squad (Uris, *The Haj* 75-78).

The Special Night Squads cross the border into Lebanon and take their sanctuary from the Arabs. Kaukji’s Irregulars are demoralized and begin to desert. Having failed against the Jews, the Mufti turns on his own people and thousands of moderate Arabs are murdered. A high-level British Commission concludes that Britain’s ability to rule the mandate is exhausted. With war threatening on the horizon in Europe, the British completely renounce their obligation to the Jewish homeland. The Commission’s White Paper calls for an end to Jewish immigration and to land sales. When World War II breaks out, the entire Arab world allies spiritually with the Nazis while one hundred and thirty thousand men and women of Jewish Palestine volunteer for military service with the British (Uris, *The Haj* 80-82).

in an intimate conversation with Gideon, Haj Ibrahim pinpoints the predicament of the Arab masses: “Why is it that the only men we follow are the ones who hold a knife to our throats?... We learn we must submit. That is what the Koran tells us. Submit! Submit! But the men we submit to never carry out the Prophet’s will, only their own... (Uris, *The Haj* 83). Haj Ibrahim appears to be anticipating the anguish of the Arab masses of today.

For his part, Gideon appears to be anticipating, at least in some measure, the anguish of the Jews to this day when he says, ““Perhaps if we Jews weren’t overburdened all our lives with the fear of perishing_____ It dominates us! Always afraid of perishing. I am fifty three, Ibrahim, I’ve carried a gun since I was fourteen.
Is it fair to know every minute of your life that forces out there want you dead and won’t end it until you’re dead... and no one hears you cry...’” (Uris, The Haj 84).

Italy masses its troops in the African desert to conquer Egypt, the Suez Canal and Palestine. But the British put up a brave resistance and even beat back the Italians. Hitler sends his brilliant general Erwin Rommel and the Afrika Corps. Rommel wins back the territory lost by the Italians and stands poised at the Egyptian border. Palestine is in peril. The British put together a composite force of several nationalities and invade Syria and Lebanon. The invasion is led by Jewish scouts, most of them former members of Wingate’s Special Night Squads. The British also invade Iraq, again Gideon’s scouts leading them in. Gideon is betrayed and imprisoned and his left arm is chopped off. The Mufti flees Iraq into Iran. When the British invade Iran, he seeks asylum in the Japanese embassy and later flees to Berlin. The British general Montgomerry completes the final defeat of Rommel’s Afrika Corps (Uris, The Haj 85-87).

A parting piece of advice from Walid Aziz, the desert ruler of the Wahhabis, to his new son-in-law Haj Ibrahim sums up the reality in Palestine, which is still valid:

“All the rest of the foreigners have come to Palestine to exploit us. The Jews have come to stay. They have done well by the land. They can be trusted more than anyone else, including ourselves. In the end we will get a better deal from a Gideon Asch than from the Syrians, the Jordanians, the British, anyone. Of course, out in public, you must scream and rage about Jewish presence. However, when you pick up a
gun against them, make sure your aim is bad and make sure they know you never meant to hit anything. Allah forbid I have to go back under Egyptian rule.” (Uris, *The Haj* 101-02)

At the end of the Second World War, as the lid is lifted on the Nazis’ concentration camps in Eastern Europe, the stench of the human slaughterhouses permeates Europe. Many Jews just cannot believe that the Holocaust occurred at all. Soon their disbelief is replaced by depression. However, there is an urgent need to salvage what is left of the Jewish population and to prepare for the inevitable war with the Arabs in Palestine (Uris, *The Haj* 148-49).

The new British Labour government chooses a Jew-baiter named Ernest Bevin as its Foreign Secretary. Upon assuming office, he promptly orders the Royal Navy to blockade Palestine against refugee ships. The Yishuv resorts to Aliyah Bet—illegal immigration. The Haganah keeps its powder dry, but the Palmach is training apace. But the two independent armed bands, The Irgun and the Stem, are impatient to hit back at the British establishment. At last, unable to tolerate the British inhuman attitude to the survivors of the Holocaust, the Haganah too plunges into armed action. The British pour in more troops and resort to more repressive measures. The Irgun blows up the British headquarters in Jerusalem’s King David Hotel. The British are forced to back down (Uris, *The Haj* 149-51).

Britain declares that it is turning the Palestine problem over to the United Nations. In 1947, the United Nations votes on a partition plan and votes for two Palestinian States, one Jewish and the other Arab. The British announce that they will
withdraw from Palestine by 14 May 1948. At once every Arab state and entity vows to annihilate the new Jewish state (Uris, *The Haj* 151-54).

With the United Nations approving the partition of Palestine, the Jews prepare to meet the flood of opposition from the Arabs. Endless meetings are conducted to finalize their strategy. Finally everyone agrees to David Ben-Gurion’s stand that not a single Jewish settlement, however indefensible, will be given up without a fight. The final decision, namely, the Jewish attitude to the Arab population, is formulated according to Ben-Gurion’s wisdom (Uris, *The Haj* 186-91). He says,

“The Arabs have begged for this war. . . . But we have too many other priorities to engage in endless quarrels with them. We must win the war and come out of it with a viable state. There are so many things a Jewish state must accomplish, for we and our moral standards must be the light of mankind.

“Yet we are the worst kind of fools if we think we can carry out our schemes of grandeur in the midst of hostile neighbours. We must have peace and we must live with the Arabs if our state is to flourish as something more than a fortress.

“Never... will we adopt any policy to drive the Arabs from Palestine.... If the Arabs choose to run, I will not beg them to stay. If they leave Palestine, I will not beg them to return.... But when a man leaves his home during a war he started, he cannot expect us to be responsible for his future.
... One final policy. We must always keep the door open to negotiation and peace. Some day an Arab leader will walk through it and sit down and talk with us...” (Uris, The Haj 191-92)

Kaukji’s Arab Army of Liberation and Abdul Kadar Husseini’s Army of the Jihad fail to dislodge even a single Jewish settlement. British deserters, dressed as Arabs, assist in terrible bombings. The Jewish Agency headquarters and the Jewish Palestine Post building are destroyed. In retaliation, the Irgun and the Haganah destroy Arab headquarters in both Jaffa and Jerusalem. Kaukji’s Irregulars gradually disappear. Despite Jewish assurances, the Arabs of Haifa, heeding the advice of Kaukji’s officers, evacuate the city and Haifa is virtually in Jewish hands. With the Arabs all but defeated, the Arab Legion of Jordan, breaking its promise, crosses the Jordan river and capture the isolated Jewish settlement known as the Etzion Block, giving the Yishuv a massive jolt (Uris, The Haj, pt.2, ch.9).

West Jerusalem, housing a hundred thousand Jews, is laid under siege by the Arabs, who throw a ring of steel around the city. The British advise the Jews to move their people out of West Jerusalem to forestall a massacre. The Jews reject the British advice. Ben-Gurion orders that the road to Jerusalem be opened at any cost. It is done. The Arabs mount an all out attempt to reverse it, but fail. In the process, Abdul Kadar Husseini is killed (Uris, The Haj, 2.ch. 10).

The Jordanians have a secret agenda of their own. They are not averse to peaceful relations with the new State of Israel. King Abdullah has an ambition to form a greater Arab Nation which would, besides his current kingdom of Trans-Jordan, include the West Bank and the Gaza strip. In other words he hopes to absorb
the emerging Arab Palestinian entity into his own kingdom. To this end colonel Farid Zyyad of Jordanian Intelligence holds several meetings with Gideon Asch. When the Arabs finally see that they cannot wipe out Israel, they agree to an armistice to be negotiated on the Island of Rhodes with Ralph Bunche of the United Nations mediating. Colonel Zyyad is upset that the Jews will be talking to the Egyptians and not to the Jordanians, who hold territory in Palestine while the Egyptian army has been routed. Zyyad wants Israel to hand over the Gaza strip to Jordan and to allow Jordan access to the sea through Israeli territory through the port of Gaza. Zyyad even says that Egypt is more Jordan’s enemy than Israel. In reply, Asch says that if Israel is to capture and hold the Gaza strip for Jordan, Israel would ask for a peace treaty from Jordan, which Jordan is not strong enough to make. Zyyad shows Asch a letter from King Abdullah to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion spelling out the Jordanian terms and, after Asch has read it, seals it and hands it over (Uris, The Haj 314-16).

On the ground the Egyptian army is trapped in El Arish and ready to flee or surrender. Israel’s southern commander Yigal Allon is eagerly awaiting clearance to capture all of them and seal off the Gaza strip. He complains that his repeated requests for a meeting with Ben-Gurion have elicited no response. Asch, who is carrying a cease-fire order, does not deliver it to Allon, but returns to Jerusalem. He confronts Ben-Gurion and asserts that Allon is entitled to a meeting with Ben-Gurion and the Cabinet. Ben-Gurion does not want the Egyptians to be destroyed or captured. He does not want a similar fate for the Arabs in the Gaza strip, simply because Israel cannot afford to feed them all. Moreover the British have demonstrated clearly that they do not want the Egyptians to be destroyed. Several British battle ships have left
Cyprus and five British Spitfires have flown over Israeli lines and have been shot down. The American Ambassador has warned that if Israel does not go into an immediate ceasefire, the US will stop all aid (Uris, *The Haj* 319-20).

Asch gives Ben Gurion King Abdullah’s secret letter and recommends it. But Ben-Gurion insists that Israel must not humiliate Egypt further by not talking to it first at Rhodes because only that will pave the way for peace (Uris, *The Haj* 320-21). Asch’s response is almost prophetic:

> “Humiliation, my ass! They will only talk peace as long as it suits their purposes. They will only keep a peace treaty as long as it suits their purposes. I’ll tell you how grateful the Egyptians will be if we hand the strip to them. They will turn it into a massive guerilla base and launch a thousand attacks on us. We will pay for giving them Gaza in blood... in blood for the rest of our lives.” (Uris, *The Haj* 321)

Ben-Gurion’s response to Asch is patently statesmanlike: “‘So I have been told. We can fight these wars only as long as we are right. That must be our gamble. Our energies must pour into other things.... The Jewish state has too many priorities to play the Arab game’” (Uris, *The Haj* 321). Indeed, the State of Israel has more or less kept to this path of wisdom and reaped a rich harvest.

Shimshonit’s review of *The Haj* is pro-Israeli. but its observations on Uris’s portrayal of the Arabs is not far from the truth:

The many plot lines touch a variety of issues in Arab life, from gender relations, shame culture, relations with non-Arabs, intra-Arab violence and manipulation, and the face the Arabs show one another versus the
one they show the world. Uris’s novel is refreshingly complex, and while it shows both the admirable and less admirable sides of the Arab psyche, it is overall a sympathetic portrait of the Palestinians. This does not mean it condones the propaganda, violence, and frenzied hatred of the Arabs for Jews; in fact, it shows how these very things stand in the way of Arabs and Jews being able to reach a peaceful solution, and the betterment of Arab quality of life… (Shimshonit.


The Shimshonit review admits that Uris’s novel, published in 1984, had the benefit of hindsight on many of the events that would come to pass years after his story comes to a close, like the assassination of Anwar Sadat for making peace with Israel, the decades of neglect by the Arab nations of the refugees, the mounting hostility toward Israel in the UN and Israel going to war time again to defend itself from its hostile Arab neighbours. It also admits that Uris’s attitude is that of a rabid, anti-Arab Zionist. However, it assets that the words of his Arab characters reflect real confusion, paradox, and occasional self-criticism which a handful of Arabs (much better educated than a muktar) have articulated in writing. It concludes that The Haj clearly shows that the plight of Arab refugees is the work of their own leaders, their culture, their religion, and their ignorance (Shimshonit. Book review: Leon Uris’s The Haj. shimshonit.wordpress.com. 17 March 2011. Web. 20 May 2012).

Uris’s novel Mitla Pass is an unconcealed glorification of the military might and capability of the State of Israel. The authorial sub-text appears to be to urge that
Israel has achieved its destiny after two millennia of groping in the dark and grabbing at flimsy straws of hope.

The narrative of Uris’s novel *Mitla Pass* commences nine days before the 1956 Arab-Israeli war (D Day Minus Nine). It is past midnight and the Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion has done with his numerous aides and callers. The only job remaining at 2 a.m. is for him to sign the single page document approving Operation Kadesh that will commit Israel to a war eight years after he signed another single page document that declared the establishment of the State of Israel (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 11-12).

The past few weeks have been a nightmare of activities intended to enhance the poor Israeli odds. The grim predicament requires that Israel must win the war in the first four days. But, on the ground, almost everything goes wrong as D Day approaches. There is also a secret fear that France and England may renege on their promise of collaboration and quit. At last Ben-Gurion signs the document setting Operation Kadesh into motion. After that his adviser Jacob Herzog presents a document permitting the famous Jewish writer Gideon Zadok to go into the Sinai with a forward unit of the Israeli Defence Force. Ben-Gurion gladly signs the document because he believes that Israel is “‘entitled to a poor man’s Flemingway’” (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 12-16).

Gideon flies over the Sinai with the Lions Battalion, who are to be air-dropped near Mitla Pass, almost near the Suez Canal, deep inside Egyptian territory. Commanded by Ben Asher, they are to prevent any Egyptian reinforcements through the Mitla Pass till the parent formation, the Paratroop Brigade, links up with them and
then, together, they are to swing south to free the blockaded passage to the Red Sea (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 25-27).

Gideon is accompanied by his full-time assistant, Shlomo Bar Adon, from the Israeli Foreign Ministry, who has coordinated all Gideon’s interviews, travels, translations and tours. Gideon pestered the Israelis to be allowed to join an action over the border so that his proposed book on Israel will be authentic. His novel on the US Marines, *Of Men in Battle*, was already the bible of the army of Israel. He accompanied the Lions Battalion on a few raids. He also participated in the Kalkilia raid, a decoy incursion into Jordan to mislead enemies and conceal the fact that Egypt was to be the prime target of Israel (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 19-38).

Gideon’s ancestry presents yet another facet of Jewish life. His father, Nathan Zadok, was the first of the seven children of Yehuda and Sophie Zadok of Wolkowysk in Russia at the turn of the twentieth century. Yehuda was the *shohet* of Wolkowysk, the ritual slaughterer of chickens. Nathan was marked to succeed his father. So he became the beast of burden of the family. When he perceived that he was being discriminated against because his younger brother Mordechai was smarter, he resented it and, early in life, he decided to escape the Pale one day and become wealthy (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 167-72).

During the Crusades, hundreds of thousands of Jews fled to Poland, mostly at the invitation of the Polish nobility, who needed Jewish skills to establish a useful middle class. After the Russians baulked the onward march of the Moslems, they began to persecute the Jews. A series of pogroms and international changes led to the
formation of the Jewish Pale of Settlement, to which the Jews were confined—a monstrous ghetto (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 174-77).

Thanks to his mother’s intercession and suggestion, Yehuda was enrolled in the gymnasium in Bielystok. His life was miserable. He learnt languages and the history of nations beyond the Pale. He was at last free of the Talmud. He immersed himself in books and literature. He took to lecturing and debating (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 180-84).

At the age of fifteen, Nathan was recalled to Wolkowysk. His father had suffered a stroke and Nathan had to take over the responsibility of the breadwinner of the family. As the other children were sent to live with relatives, Nathan was sent to Mariupol to his mother’s sister Tante Sonia, who was married to a well-off coal merchant. In the course of the five-day, three thousand mile railway journey, Nathan encountered all forms of anti-semitism (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 189-89).

In Mariupol the Borokovs lived in a big, richly furnished house. Nathan was well fed and well paid. But he was also overworked, shovelling coal for sixty-two hours a week. Soon it became evident that his cousin Tilly had her own designs on Nathan. When Nathan developed a severe cough because of the coal dust, he was moved to the office and even given a raise, including pocket money. Soon Nathan realised that he was being fatted for slaughter-to marry the ugly Tilly. So Nathan invented a bout of non-stop coughing, till the Borokovs were sick of him. Sometime later, a letter arrived stating that a job was waiting for him in Minsk in the jewellery store of another uncle, Bernie Zadok (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 190-95).
The train journey from Mariupol to Minsk was equally bad, with a lot of Jew-baiting. In fact Nathan reached Minsk unconscious and badly injured. Conditions in Minsk were better. Conditions at Wolkowysk also improved with the recovery of Yehuda. When Russian troops began to retreat before the German army, the government ordered conscription. Uncle Bernie told Nathan to go back to Wolkowysk and decide in consultation with his father (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 195-99).

It was considered honourable for Russian Jews to avoid service in the Russian army, because those who enlisted were generally never heard from for years. They were sent off to Siberian duty and were converted to Christianity by fair means or foul. Accordingly, Yehuda, who had become a supporter of the Zionist movement, obtained false papers in the name of seventeen-year-old Pinchas Hirsch for Nathan. Nathan had to leave for Poland after just one meal with the family. When the railway line ended, Nathan found three other youngsters like him and they moved westwards as a team. They met a committed Zionist named Perchik. He told them how to reach Warsaw. Nathan opted out. He had no great illusions about attempting to reach Palestine. He felt that his first duty was to his family (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 200-09).

Nathan fell into German hands and was resigned to being sent to a labour battalion. But the Germans urgently needed someone who could translate German into Russian and Polish. Nathan fitted the bill and so he escaped being sent to a labour camp but stayed in the Bialystok railway yard. He found himself in a good position to help his family (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 209-12).

Nathan’s younger brother Matthias became the vocal Zionist of the family. The community selected him to go to Palestine as a pioneer. But Nathan also wanted
to go to Palestine. So Matthias gave up his place to Nathan (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 214-16). Nathan travelled to Poland and joined a group of three hundred pioneers leaving for Eretz Israel. On the train he was drawn to one of the forty girls, Rosie Gittleman, a plain, thin and drab girl. They became close little by little. A few days from Palestine, they decided to try their fortune in Israel together. But, on reaching Palestine, Rosie died (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 218-29).

To Nathan, Palestine was a disappointment from day one. He could not fit in. He went up to Jerusalem only to see that it was equally disappointing and discouraging. He left Jerusalem and worked for a few months as a common labourer, doing sundry jobs. Seven months later, he accepted an invitation to move to a *kibbutz* named Hermon. But he was a total failure in the *kibbutz*. He just could not shed his *shtetl* mindset or become “communal”. So the leaders of the *kibbutz* decided to send him to the proposed new settlement on the Huleh Lake. Nathan went to the Huleh Lake, but could not cope. After a slow recovery from a severe attack of malaria, Nathan decided to leave Palestine and go to America. He declared that Zionism had failed him (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 230-48).

In 1887, Captain Percy Holifield, Commander of the American corvette, the USS *Quinmbaug*, was informed that he had been promoted to the rank of Commodore, that he was to take his ship to represent America at Queen Victoria’s golden jubilee and that, after that, he was to return to the United States and take over as Superintendent of the United States Naval Academy. Holifield had been at sea for three years and his uniforms were in tatters. The finest tailor in the port town of Cork pleaded inability to make a new uniform for Holifield at such short notice, though the
officer had all the material required. However, he was referred to a Jewish tailor in Queenstown, where his ship was berthed. Holifield met the tailor, named Balaban, and he agreed to make the uniform (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 260-64).

Moses Balaban was a Romanian Jew. He came to Ireland at the call of his brother Herman, who had established himself in Queenstown. Moses was a loner, stingy and rather disagreeable. He was a widower with two sons, Saul and Lazar. After completing Holifield’s new uniform, Moses refused to receive any charge, because the Talmud said that one must make one great gesture of that sort in one’s lifetime (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 265-67).

After taking over as Superintendent of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Holifield wrote to Moses, offering him the post of chief tailor at the Academy. Moses moved to Annapolis with his sons. He was quite content at Annapolis. But Holifield died after fifteen months. His successor was not quite sympathetic to Moses. So Moses moved out of Annapolis and bought up a tailoring business at Havre de Grace near Baltimore (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 268-71).

There were only five Jewish children in Havre de Grace and so Saul and Lazar had to slug it out at school. So they grew wily and wild. Moses realised that he needed a wife to take care of his sons. He selected a spinster named Hannah Diamond in Baltimore. They were married. Hannah came to her husband’s house and was disappointed. Moses was a stingy loveless animal. But she found consolation in the love of Saul and Lazar. She delivered three daughters, Leah, Fanny and Pearl. Unhappy with the gentile ambience of Havre de Grace, Hannah proposed that the family should move to Baltimore. Moses rejected the idea. Hannah decided to leave Moses. One day
the police brought the corpse of Saul, killed in a freight train accident. Hannah left for
Baltimore, along with the hoard of money Moses had hidden in a secret place in the
flooring. Moses went berserk, but could do little. Soon Lazar joined Hannah and his
half-sisters (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 271-88).

Uncle Hyman, who owned a pharmacy, and helped everyone, took in Lazar as
an apprentice pharmacist and paid his tuition to study in night school. He also helped
the family to keep their head above water. Lazar became the head of the family and
protected them. For her part Hannah did all in her power to keep him a confirmed
bachelor. Similarly, the three girls seemed fated to remain spinsters (Uris, *Mitla Pass*
289-92).

There was a proposal of marriage for Leah from Richard Schneider, the only
son of Hannah’s second cousin. Leah was reluctant, but Hannah encouraged her to
consent. The contract delivered Hannah from her financial burdens. But the marriage
itself was a disaster. Leah never allowed Richard to consummate it. After six months
of frustration, Richard was charged with impotence and the marriage was annulled
(Uris, *Mitla Pass* 293-305).

During the First World War Lazar enlisted in the Navy. Upon learning of it
Hannah put up a near-convincing drama of a heart attack. Uncle Hyman promised to
pay the family Lazar’s salary every month and, when he returned, to establish him in
his own drugstore. Anyway Lazar put an end to the tantrums of the women of the
family by simply and firmly announcing that he was going (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 305-07).

Lazar was made Chief Pharmacist’s Mate in a medical detachment which was
to establish a medical service for the Marine Corps. Lazar’s unit was dispatched to
France with a brigade consisting of the 5\textsuperscript{th} and the 6\textsuperscript{th} Marine Regiments. The war brought well paying jobs for Leah, Fanny and Pearl. Hannah became a dedicated war-mother. Jewish servicemen were always welcome in the new, spacious Balaban house. Leah coveted and cornered Lieutenant Joseph Kramer from Missouri. Fanny won the heart of Alain Singer from Cleveland. Soon Joe took Leah to a hotel and Al Singer gave Fanny an engagement ring. Leah and Fanny were married simultaneously before their husbands sailed for France, leaving their wives pregnant (Uris, \textit{Mitla Pass} 309-13).

Hannah felt proud of her granddaughters Molly Kramer and Edith Singer, and as the war brought an economic boom, she was afraid that everything might crash one day. And crash it did. Uncle Hyman, their generous benefactor, died. Moses Balaban at Havre de Grace lost everything to a pair of con men, suffered a stroke, liquidated everything to cover his debts and then begged Hannah to take him in, after his brothers in Savannah had refused to do so. Hannah took him in, with strict conditions. A telegram arrived to announce that Lazar had been wounded at Belleau Wood. Several months later Lazar wrote to say that he had married a French Protestant widow with a son. Leah seemed to be having secret affairs on the sly (Uris, \textit{Mitla Pass} 313-16).

Hannah found out that Pearl was often seen in the company of a young sailor from the family that owned the Abruzzi Brothers stall at the Lexington Street Market. Hannah went to the stall, struck up a nodding acquaintance with the owner Angelo and learnt that Pearl’s boyfriend was his youngest son Dominick, a policeman who had become a submariner. When Hannah confronted her daughter with the affair,
Pearl said that she had secretly married Dominick and was carrying his child. Hannah promptly banished her. The Abruzzis gladly welcomed her and spoiled her. When Pearl delivered a baby girl, Hanna was at her bedside (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 316-21).

The war was over. Lazar came back. His French wife Simeone and stepson Pierre also arrived. Gilbert Flyman was not as generous as his father. He made life difficult for Lazar. Dominick and Pearl moved out of the family menagerie to a small house of their own after Dominick went back to his cop’s job. Simeone and Pearl became pregnant again. Fanny persuaded A1 to leave Cleveland and move to Hannah’s house in Baltimore. One day Leah arrived with half a dozen suitcases and many bruises, carrying a tale of horror about what Joseph Kramer had done to her (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 322-28).

The economy slowed down and everyone began to feel the pinch. Hannah was forced to sell her house and business and move to a two-flat house on Monroe Street. Since there was no room for Moses, she planned to send him to a home for the aged. Moses revealed that he had a secret hoard and offered to buy the house on Monroe Street, provided Hannah took him with her. When he said that some feeling was returning to his hands, raising the hope that he might be able to do tailoring again, Hannah consented to keep him (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 328-29).

On the second day of the war, around noon, the war is not going too well for Israel. The Israelis have not established control of the air. The British and the French, who were scheduled to neutralise Egypt’s air power, have not taken to the skies. Russia and America are applying pressure on Israel to cease fire. Zechariah, the overall commander of the Lions, is almost facing a disaster. Ben-Gurion wants the
Lion’s Battalion evacuated. His Chief of Staff, one-eyed General Moshe Dayan, wants to wait till nightfall. When Ben-Gurion insists, Dayan threatens to resign. Ben-Gurion gives in, but there is a telegram from De Gaulle of a Soviet threat of a missile attack on Paris which has caused the French and the British to delay their air strike by a day (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 333-37).

Gideon’s paramour in Israel, Natasha Solomon, a Hungarian Jew, works in the Prime Minister’s office. Hers was an affluent family of Budapest, consisting of doctors, teachers and merchants, highly respected. Professor Doctor Herbert Solomon was a misanthrope whose leanings were rabidly patriarchal. But he had a soft corner for Natasha. When the family was rounded up by the Nazis, Natasha escaped by using a blonde wig and false documents, along with three other Jewish girls. But they were found and taken to Auschwitz. Her father’s life had been spared and he was teaching the children of SS Officers. She was put to work in a clothing factory. Once she sent him a birthday greeting. The guards mistook it and he was sent to the gas chamber. There was as a love-hate relationship between Natasha and her father (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 355-56).

Early in the morning of the third day, Gideon learns from Shlomo that Zechariah’s troops are on their way to link with the Lions Battalion. At eight in the morning the Lions come awake. It is learnt that Zechariah is on his way, but there is no sign of his force. Egyptian planes attack the Lions Battalion (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 359-71).

There was a strike at the Ginzberg Brothers clothing factory in Baltimore. Two union organisers came from New York from the Jewish Workers Forum. There
was a mounted charge at the gate and twelve women workers were taken to jail. One of them was Leah and she became an instant martyr. She was also attracted to one of the union organizers, Nathan Zadok. The communist party had sent him to Baltimore as a party functionary. He took Leah and four of the other jailed women workers on a victory tour. Leah’s daughter Molly too was taken along. During the tour Leah and Nathan were married in a rabbi’s home. Molly was asked to call Nathan “Daddy.” Leah told Molly that her real father Joseph Kramer had been killed in the war (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 372-81).

In 1924, Molly received her promised baby brother who was named Gideon. Nathan’s earnings as the manager of the party newspaper were not enough. Sometimes Leah used questionable strategies to blackmail traders into giving her money. Nathan got free passes to cultural and artistic events. He rarely used them. But Leah took Molly and Gideon to almost every one of them. Even as a child Gideon was a great reader and he devoured books. He was always thinking about stories. Molly knew that Gideon would be a writer one day (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 381-85).

Gideon was constantly sick and Molly spent most of her time taking him to clinics. He was allergic to virtually everything. At long last, the party arranged for Nathan to become an apprentice to a wall paper hanger. It was a tough job, but Nathan felt that it was far better than all the jobs he had done till then. As the job took Nathan away frequently, Leah became very friendly with many of the male comrades. Nathan was upset at Gideon’s partiality for bourgeois interests. But Leah encouraged him (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 386-90).
Gideon’s sixth-grade teacher at school in Baltimore was Miss. Abigail Williams. She was no great beauty but she was an aviatrix. She was also a teacher with a difference, physically active, outdoorsy and adventurous. Gideon hit it off with Miss. Abigail from day one. She confided in him that she was a supporter of the anti-slavery movement, but could not openly appear so because, if she did, she would lose her job. Gideon confided in her that, as a Jewish boy, he did not believe in Jesus and therefore merely pretended to mouth the words of the Christian songs sung in the school (Uris, *Mitra Pass* 391-94).

One evening, Gideon saw Miss. Abigail playing an important part in a secret activity of a communal nature near a black church. Gideon held his tongue for two weeks. Then, one day, he left behind a story he had written. As usual, it reached Miss. Abigail and she asked him to remain after class. She congratulated him on his stories and asked him why he wanted to become a writer. He replied that he wanted to become a writer so that he could make people angry and stir them up. Miss. Abigail was startled, but she realised that Gideon was the genius she had been waiting for. She appreciated and encouraged his talent for writing. She commissioned him to write a play for the school children. Gideon was elated. Then he revealed to her that he was witness to her playing an active role in a black communist lawyer’s attempt to fleece to Russia for higher studies (Uris, *Mitra Pass* 394-99).

Gideon’s family objected to his playing baseball, but Gideon stood his ground. Molly too began to assert her rights. Their mother Leah was indifferent to the family and Nathan had no time for any domestic exertion. It was clear that neither of
them was interested in Gideon or Molly. So, quite naturally, Gideon rebelled (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 399-404).

On Gideon’s last day in her class, Miss. Abigail offered to take him up in her plane. On the appointed day, Miss. Abigail took Gideon up in her plane. They climbed very high and Miss. Abigail made him open his canopy and see the stars close by. Upon returning to the ground, she told him that she took him up to teach him the truth that reaching the top and staying there required a great deal of toughness and the ability to take a lot of pain. She then informed him that she was going to Spain with her brother to fight for the Loyalists. She was going as an American, not as a communist, having resigned from the party. As they parted, Gideon told her that, when he wrote something worth publishing, he would dedicate it to her (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 404-09).

Gideon carried on an exciting correspondence with Miss. Abigail in Spain. She gave him a lot of tips on how to prepare to be a great writer, including comments on Ernest Hemmingway, whom she met in Madrid. She even sent him a letter of advice and encouragement from ‘Papa’ Hemmingway. When she was killed in battle, Gideon was crushed. Leah, with her marriage to Nathan virtually broken up, decided to leave Norfolk and go to Baltimore. Gideon refused to budge, particularly because Molly was staying back to complete her graduation and get a decent job (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 412-20).

Leah had an almost convincing story for her mother Hannah. Soon after, Leah told Hannah that she was going to New York, where a dentist awaited her, despite being married and having children. Meanwhile Nathan returned home and found a blackmail note silencing him. Moreover the party advised him to go through the
divorce quietly. Nathan wrote to Gideon reporting ill health and penury and begging his son to write to him (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 420-27).

In Baltimore Gideon soon became a gang leader. His uncle Dominic Abruzzi, who was a detective sergeant, was able to talk the juvenile officers into keeping Gideon’s name off the police records. Realising that neither his parents nor his grandmother would be able to do anything, Dominic and Lazar decided to redeem him. Lazar helped Gideon to transfer to a school in his refined area. Gradually Gideon told Lazar about his relationship with his father. Nathan was a thorn in Gideon’s flesh, always lecturing him. His new wife Lena was equally a nagger with the additional irritant of ever nagging him to stuff himself with food. One day Nathan forced Gideon to become a member of the Young Communist League. However, during the oath taking, Gideon swore allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Nathan beat him up, but Gideon escaped. One week later, Nathan was expelled from the party (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 429-34).

Lazar helped A1 Singer and he prospered and moved out of Hannah’s house. Molly and her husband Danny moved in, so that Gideon could receive more and better care. Lazar gave Gideon a little dog as a present. Gideon named him Dinky and loved it. Leah returned to Hannah’s house and, during Gideon’s absence, got rid of Dinky. Gideon was lost without the dog. One night he heard Leah confess the fact to Hannah. He never forgave his mother and was perpetually angry (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 434-35).

Molly’s husband Danny was involved in an accident and hospitalised. Dominic and Lazar had to help Molly. Leah left for Washington and married a shoe
clerk. Bubba Hannah, matriarch of the family, died. Gideon was disconsolate. He became withdrawn, serious and filled with despair. It was clear that he longed for an empathetic companion (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 435-36).

Leah wrote to say that she planned to take Gideon to Washington to live with her. Gideon tried to commit suicide by taking some pills. He wanted to die. A judge signed a decree making Lazar the guardian of Gideon (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 437-38).

America was forced into the war. Lazar was upset because his stepson Pierre wanted to interrupt his postgraduate studies and enlist. Molly arrived with the news that Gideon had enlisted in the Marine Corps. Lazar went up to reason with the boy. Gideon declared that he wanted to experience life so that he could become a writer. He wanted his own Belleau Wood, so Lazar told him the truth about Belleau Wood, disproportionately romanticized by writers. Belleau Wood was hell, death and destruction, nothing romantic. The US Marines had no option to fall back or call in replacements. So they slugged it out. After the horrible narration, Lazar removed his shirt and showed Gideon his horrible wound. After all that Gideon wanted to go. Lazar understood and signed the papers and wished him well (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 439-47).

Around noon on the third day of the war, the radio messages from the Southern Command are all negative. Ben Asher is directed to prepare to evacuate the Lions by air. As the preparations to evacuate are almost completed, Zechariah’s Para 202 is sighted approaching. Asher radios Southern Command to cancel the air evacuation. Central Command from Tel Aviv radios to state that the Anglo-French have commenced air and ground attack on Egypt and that Israel has agreed to an
ultimatum to halt eight miles from the Suez Canal. As the exhausted men of Para 202 recuperate and sleep, Zechariah plans for the next day. Dr. Schwartz protests that the men need at least two days of rest before they can march down to Sharm-el-Sheik, one hundred seventy-five miles away. But Zechariah is determined to push south the next morning. Asher suggests that they wait till morning to assess and decide better. Zechariah wants Asher to capture Mitla Pass before Para 202 swings south. Asher protests that he has specific orders from General Moshe Dayan, the Chief of Staff, not to enter Mitla Pass. Zechariah asserts the right of the commander in the field to change orders. Asher bluntly says that Zechariah will have to relieve him of his command first, because he refuses to enter Mitla Pass. Zechariah radios Central Command for permission to remove Asher from his command and to take Mitla Pass. Central command refuses permission for both. Zechariah radios Central Command for permission to send a patrol a little inside Mitla Pass to keep the Egyptians tied down. Central Command permits a limited patrol into Mitla Pass as requested by Zechariah (Uris, Mitla Pass 451-60).

Gideon obtains Zechariah’s permission to go into Mitla Pass with the patrol. When the Orders of the Day is displayed early in the morning of the fourth day of the war, Asher perceives that Zechariah’s intention is to capture Mitla Pass and not just to secure it against a breakout into the Sinai by the Egyptians. Asher enters Zechariah’s tent and protests. Zechariah shows him a message received during the night signed by both David Ben-Gurion and General Moshe Dayan. It states that the Anglo-French Expeditionary Force has been forced to cease all operations because of political
pressure from Washington and Moscow and that Israel will continue operations on all fronts until objectives are reached (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 461-64).

Israel is all alone now. Each one of its forces all over the Sinai must go hell bent for leather because Israel will soon come under international pressure to cease hostilities. They must reach the Suez Canal before any cease-fire comes into effect. There is also the danger that Jordan and Syria might jump into the fray. There is also the fact that, with England and France out of the action, the Egyptians may grow bold enough to release their reserves and pin the Israelis down at Mitla Pass. So Zechariah wants Asher to capture Mitla Pass. Asher points out that they both may be pulled up for disobeying orders. However, the basic rule of war supports them, namely, that the commander in the field can make the ultimate decision. All that Zechariah needs is Asher’s support (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 464-65).

Early in the morning of the fourth day of the war, with a patrol one mile inside Mitla Pass, Asher orders the Reconnaissance unit of Para 202 to hide their vehicles and climb out of enemy sight and work their way over the top of the Heitan Defile so as to be able to attack the enemy from above. He also orders all his units to seek cover, dig in and cover the Recon unit. The moment the Recon unit starts climbing, the Egyptians open fire with all that they have. As Asher gains control of the battle, the Egyptians spot his command post and plaster it with mortar fire. Asher needs a better spot to direct fire from. Gideon spots one. Since no telephone man is available, Shlomo and Gideon climb up to the vantage spot. Gideon climbs a little higher for a better view and calls down accurate directions to be relayed to the tanks and the soldiers. Asher wants air support, Gideon sees that it will be of no use and instead,
wants their planes just to keep the Egyptian planes off. This is done at once, bringing
cheer to the Israeli soldiers. The reserve company moves in with supplies. Gideon
also directs the Recon unit so as to be able to avoid Egyptian fire. Asher is killed and
Captain Masada takes over command. Realising at last that the gunfire spotter is
responsible for most of their damage, the Egyptians open a mortar barrage on the
ledge. Their shells shatter Gideon’s binoculars and flip him over. As Shlomo and
Gideon perceive that they can do no more there, the tanks withdraw and the mortars
cease fire, because the men of the Recon unit are descending by ropes, tossing
grenades on the Egyptian caves. As Shlomo raises himself to assist Gideon down, he
catches bullet in the stomach and falls dead into the command post. Zechariah
receives good news from Central Command and an order to move Para 202 south to
assist Yoffe’s Brigade in the capture of Sharm-el-Sheik (Uris, Mitla Pass 466-72).

Zechariah is directed to abandon Mitla Pass because it has no military value
He now admits to Gideon that it may appear that Mitla Pass did not have to be taken.
He reads correctly Gideon’s thought that Zechariah is a butcher. However, he protests
that he too has tears. He then tells Gideon that his kid brother was killed that day at El
Arish. He says that he learnt at an early age to cry inside and only when he is alone.
He avers that since the age of twelve he has been serving the State of Israel in one
way or another on some mission or another and that he will again and again be called
upon to clean up the mess created by the great thinkers and great statesmen. As
Zechariah prepares to move south towards Sharm-el-Sheik, Gideon decides to take
Shlomo’s body home (Uris, Mitla Pass 473-74).
Natasha takes a drunken and doped Gideon out of Israel and on to Kyrenia in Cyprus. Gideon fights his way out of the haze of dope and his former feelings of guilt and gradually gains the hope that he can now write his intended book (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 477-88). Gideon rejoins his family in Rome. He is at peace at last. He is confident that he can write his book, which he has tentatively titled *The Galilee* (Uris, *Mitla Pass* 489-{93}).

Uris’s novel *A God in Ruins* is virtually a prophetic paean to the Jewish race in that it shows a Jew making it the White House—a none-too-well camouflaged dream of American Jews—the citadel of global power.

The very opening sentence of *A God in Ruins* rings in the Jewish theme.

Quinn Patrick O’Connell, Governor of Colorado, and the Democratic candidate for President in 2008, learns, less than a week before the election, that he was born Jewish. He was expected to be the second Roman Catholic President in American history, but, unknown to him until now, he will be the first Jewish President of America. His half brother, Ben Horowitz, who has been searching for him for half a century, has found him just now. Quinn plans to share the news with the American people the next day, come what may. However, he is unable to decide how to tell the truth to the American people (Uris, *A God in Ruins* 03-6).

At the end of World War II, Staff Sergeant Daniel Timothy O’Connell returned home from the Marines and married his beloved Siobhan Logan. Siobhan agreed with his plan for a cross-country trip by car after the wedding, particularly to visit the parents of his dearest buddy in the Marines, the late Justin Quinn in Colorado. He was sure that they had every chance of finding something better
than what Brooklyn could offer. He certainly did not fancy remaining an Irish cop all his life (Uris, *A God in Ruins* 6-18).

One of Dan’s specific destinations was his Marine pal Justin Quinn’s huge ranch beyond Denver in Colorado, which, as the eldest son, he would have inherited had he returned alive. Dan and Siobhan reached the frontier town of Troublesome Mesa and enquired after the M/M Ranch. They reached the place and were received by Pedro Martinez, the Mexican caretaker and his wife Consuelo. Pedro suggested that Dan and he alone go to visit Justin Quinn’s parents, since their place was far removed and there was a stream to cross. Pedro took him to an outhouse that was falling to bits. Pedro contradicted most of Quinn’s claims about himself and his family. He revealed that the ranch never belonged to the Quinns. It was the property of a Serbian pair of brothers who ran it into the ground. The bank took possession and made a deal with Pedro: he was to get the ranch up and running and, when it was sold, he would get three hundred acres, his own little ranch. Justin’s father, Roscoe Quinn, was a bad man. He beat his wife and children and played with his daughter. Only Justin could handle him. One day he got drunk in Denver, raped a woman and tried to rob a bank. He was put in prison for twenty years. His wife and children went to relatives in Arizona. Justin joined the Marine Corps. As for Quinn’s scholarship to the University of Colorado, Justin never completed high school. As for the girls he boasted of, no one wanted to come near the Quinn family (Uris, *A God in Ruins* 23-27).

The First National Bank of Troublesome Mesa, which now owned M/M Ranch, sold it to Dan on condition that he retained Pedro. The O’Connells prospered,
but there was a void. After waiting three years for a baby, Dan and Siobhan decided to seek medical advice at Denver. Dr. Leary declared that Dan’s sperm was sterile because of an attack of mumps that he had suffered while serving in the Marine Corps (Urís, *A God in Ruins* 29-35).

Father Sean Logan, recalled to the States after three years in Africa, ravaged by ailments, arrived in Troublesome Mesa for a visit. He raised the question of the childlessness of his sister. Dan conceded that they might be ready to adopt. Father Sean had already told the Cardinal about it and he had advised a talk with Monsignor Gallico, the Cardinal’s closest aide. Gallico had come up with a baby who had lived with his birth parents for his first year and then had been placed in a convent. In Father Sean’s opinion, it was a wanted child and the object of great affection. He trusted the nuns, who fawned on him. Fie was handsome, smart and cuddly. He was a little gentleman with a glow about him. After a look at a photograph of the child, Siobhan gushed with pleasure and Dan went along. Sean reiterated that they could not learn anything of the child’s past. Dan assured Sean that they would do their best by the boy. Sean told them that the sisters called the boy Patrick. Dan decided to name him Quinn Patrick O’Connell. Siobhan agreed (Urís, *A God in Ruins* 24-58).

Sister Donna brought Quinn Patrick to Denver airport in 1953. Dan and Siobhan adored the baby boy from the instant they saw him. However, Siobhan was worried because Dan was proud, Irish and generational. The two parents showered love on the boy, but he did assert himself now and then. One day a schoolmate told Quinn Patrick that he had overheard his father whispering to his mother that he remembered the day the nun brought Quinn Patrick to the ranch. Dan and Siobhan
levelled with Quinn and told him all that they knew. Quinn accepted everything gracefully and declared that he loved them. But he was curious about his natural parents. Dan and Siobhan swore that they did not know. Quinn bluntly said that the church knew and left (Uris, *A God in Ruins* [74]-77).

Padro’s son Carlos and Quinn were very close. Rita Maldonado, the motherless daughter of the artist Reynaldo, a neighbour, was the only other friend Quinn had. After school Carlos went his own way, studying law. Dan saw Quinn as a sportsperson, particularly a football hero. But Quinn was more of an intellectual.

Quinn and his mother drove east to look at some colleges, but were not impressed. When they returned, Dan proudly showed them an admission letter from Harvard and crowed. Quinn was not enthused. He said that he preferred to study arts and humanities at the University of Colorado. Dan was enraged and slapped Quinn (Uris, *A God in Ruins* 77-84).

Quinn left the house. Siobhan followed him and pleaded, but perceived that it was in vain. She begged him to take the jeep, which had money and credit cards in the glove compartment. Quinn drove away in the jeep. The jeep skidded and stopped in a ditch. Rita arrived on the scene and took Quinn to her house. She was secretly in love with Quinn (Uris, *A God in Ruins* [85]-89).

Quinn enrolled in the University of Colorado, Boulder, taking humanities courses. Two years later, Dan met him in a bar in Boulder and made peace with him. Quinn came home to the ranch occasionally, sometimes with a girlfriend. Quinn’s baseball coach introduced him to a girl named Greer Little, who worked for a local weekly. After a few hours, Quinn found himself blabbering to her about his obsession
with his birth parents. Greer challenged that she could help him to raise his batting average. They practised hard the next day. They became friends. They were attracted to each other, but held back because Greer had great ambitions to rise in the media in New York and Quinn was rather conservative (Uris, *A God in Ruins* [90]-106).

Quinn and Greer had a whale of a time together. Greer became pregnant and wanted to go to New York with the baby and give it for adoption. Quinn offered to nurture the baby in Colorado. Quinn’s family held a meeting with Father Sean present. Father Sean, considering the hostility of Dan and Siobhan, suggested an abortion. Quinn was shocked. Dan complicated the matter by calling Greer a whore and saying that Quinn’s mother was a nun and a whore. Quinn walked out. When he reached his apartment, he found that Greer had had an abortion already. After mending, Greer left for New York (Uris, *A God in Ruins* [109]-16).

Major General Jeremiah Duncan of the US Marines, nicknamed Dogbreath, was a maverick. Approaching retirement, he was playing with a new toy, the lightning strike force with the SCARAB hybrid aircraft as its pivot. He recruited Quinn as his helicopter pilot and made him Marine Gunner. As Jeremiah’s team honed their skills, an Air Force Lear jet crossing the Atlantic with an American Ambassador and an American NATO general blew up in mid-air. The President of the United States saw an opportunity to strike back at the terrorists (Uris, *A God in Ruins* [133]-43).

Duncan’s lightning strike force, named Recreation and Morale (RAM) Unit, attacked Fort Urbakkan in Iran and spirited out Bandar Barakat, an Iranian intelligence official of the Shah’s era and now kept captive in the remote prison for
political prisoners. But, an unexploded cluster bomb on the ground went off and
nearly destroyed their special SCARAB plane and killed the commander Duncan and
the pilot and almost killed the copilot. A wounded Gunner Quinn took over command
and blindly flew the plane out of Iran with the aid of others on board (Uris, *A God in
Ruins* 152-77).

Quinn returned home, made up with his parents, and when the time came, laid
his father in his grave. He married his childhood sweetheart Rita Maldonado. Quinn
became State Senate Minority Leader of Colorado. He had a gorgeous family life
with a son named Duncan and a daughter named Rae, who were regular kids. Quinn
became Governor of Colorado. As Governor, he cracked down on the notorious
organisation AMERIGUN and jailed some interstate gunrunners. After that his family
suggested that he should aim for election as President in 2008. That was exactly what
he did and, at the moment, less than a week from surely being elected the second
Roman Catholic President of the United States, he has learnt that he was a Jew by

When Stalin took power in the Soviet Union after the death of Lenin, the
communists set out to destroy Jewish communal life and Zionism was considered
a cardinal crime, on par with treason. Yuri Sokolov was a Zionist who had
escaped the Warsaw ghetto and joined the Jewish partisans in White Russia. As a
Zionist, he devoted himself to sending remnants of his group to Palestine. Marina
Geller, a twenty-year-old Zionist, was engaged in similar work. Yuri and Marina
were married in a partisan wedding. Shortly after, Yuri was betrayed, charged
with Zionism and tried. Despite being tortured, Yuri refused to recant. He was

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sentenced to twenty five years in a labour camp in the Gulag Archipelago. Yuri vanished. Marina reached Palestine. She was sent to America to wake up American Jews using posters of her legendary husband. Resuming her maiden name of Geller, Marina took up a position at New York University to make ends meet. There she was attracted to Professor David Horowitz, a divorced and lonely scholar with a three year old son, Ben. Near confirmation of the death of Yuri left Marina almost mad. David stepped in. When little Ben came home on weekends, Marina quenched her thirst for love and affection. She became pregnant. She and David married and Alexander was born in 1950 (Uris, *A God in Ruins* [437]-42).

One day Shalom Katz, the Israeli diplomat at the United Nations, informed Marina that Yuri was alive. He was going to be exchanged for a Soviet spy caught in Jerusalem. He was almost a vegetable and she had to return to Israel to meet him. Since the legendary hero could not be further broken with a scandal, secrets had to be kept. David and Marina had to separate and Alexander had to be put up for adoption. David’s close friend Gallico, a Roman Catholic priest teaching at the University, took away Alexander. Marina attended on the broken Yuri and died early, followed by Yuri. At the convent of St.Catherine, Baby Alex became Baby Patrick. Father Sean Logan pleaded with Monsignor Gallico for a special child for his sister Siobhan and obtained Baby Patrick. David neglected himself and died. Before his death, he told Ben the circumstances of Alexander’s disappearance and of Marina’s death in Israel (Uris, *A God in Ruins* 442-45).

The search for his half-brother became the hub of Ben’s life. He went into police work, specialising in missing persons. Working diligently and slowly, he
traced Alexander Horowitz to Governor Quinn Patrick O’Connell. After a debate, Quinn decides to place the truth before the American people and let them decide (Uris, *A God in Ruins* 445-49).

Quinn places the truth before the American people with the assurance that there will be no change in his avowed policies and standpoints. He also avers that, having been brought up as a Catholic, he will remain in the church. He leaves it to the American people to decide whether they want him as their President or not (Uris, *A God in Ruins* 450-51). Quinn O’Connell / Alexander Horowitz is elected President of the United States (Uris, *A God in Ruins* 474).